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PLAN

OF

CHURCH REFORM.

WITH A

Letter to the King.

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BY

LORD HENLEY.

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"I know thy Works and Charity and Service and Faith, and thy Patience and thy Works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee."—*Rev. ii. 19.*

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem!"—*Isaiah, lii. 1.*

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FIFTH EDITION, WITH ADDITIONS.

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LONDON:

ROAKE AND VARTY, 31, STRAND.

1832.



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TO

THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

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SIRE,

IN offering the following Plan of CHURCH REFORM to your Majesty's notice, I trust that I shall not be deemed guilty of vanity or presumption, for I am humbly endeavouring to perform what I believe to be an important and a Religious Duty.

In all great and difficult questions, the exact truth is but slowly conveyed to persons in your Majesty's elevated station. For though the Sovereign, when called to the direct exercise of his functions, either for deliberation or for action, is, perhaps, neither misled, nor wilfully kept in ignorance; yet causes are previously

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suffered to operate with unobserved though irresistible agency, and changes silently take place in national opinions, which his Ministers may be too much occupied to perceive, or too indolent to provide for. While those who are admitted to familiar and irresponsible intercourse with him, have rarely the adequate information, and still more rarely the faithfulness and moral courage, to undertake the irksome task of pointing out imperfections in existing establishments.

The following pages were published a few weeks ago, and so favourably have they been received, that the Public is now demanding a *Fourth Edition* of them. But this fact has not of itself induced me to request for them your Majesty's notice. I am influenced by the *nature* and *character* of the testimony which I have received in their favour, and not by the *extent* of it. Of men of business, indeed, and men of the world, though a large majority have strongly approved of this Plan, yet some few undoubtedly regard it with coldness and suspicion. But I can safely assert, that no one

whose outward life and conversation evince that pure and peaceable wisdom which comes from above, has ever expressed any disapprobation of the extent to which it is carried. And I have generally found, that, the more Spiritual and the more Scriptural have been the views of those, who have honoured me with their notice and their communications, the more entire has been their approval of it.

I was impelled to the consideration of this great and interesting subject, by no earthly motive, except a heartfelt and affectionate attachment to our National Church. Such is my confidence in the excellence and purity of her Doctrines and her Ordinances, and in their sufficiency, if faithfully set forth and efficiently administered, for securing the great end for which they were instituted, that every effort, however humble, either to purify or to strengthen her, appeared to be doing God laudable service. And I considered that such duty, if performed in humility and faithfulness, would be accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.

I find many of the best friends of the Church grieved and humbled at the existence of the Evils and Corruptions which impair her beauty and her strength, and terrified at the approach of Dangers which they fear will overwhelm her. For my own part, when I look to her intrinsic excellence, and remember all God's gracious dealings with her hitherto; and above all, when I take into consideration the prayers which her devoutest and most affectionate children are daily offering for her, I cannot bring myself to believe that the Gates of Hell will prevail against her. But still I am not insensible either to the Evils, or to the Duties which the existence of them calls forth; and therefore I have been desirous to form, and to lead others to form, a just and Scriptural estimate of their nature and their extent; humbly hoping that if I could not myself suggest the adequate remedy, I might be the means of inducing wiser and better men to turn themselves to this excellent work.

I deeply feel both the greatness and the difficulty of the task, but I have not approached



it in my own strength or wisdom. And he who is enabled to go forth in this spirit, needs not to be dismayed by a sense of his own weakness and insufficiency; knowing that God often places the treasures of Heavenly wisdom in earthen vessels; and as if to humble the wise and the scribe and the disputer of this world, and to moderate the confidence of intellectual power, employs inconsiderable instruments to effect great dispensations of his Providence.

The most grievous of these Evils, SIRE, is the *Non-residence of the Beneficed Clergy*. This is so extensive, that, it appears from the last Parliamentary Returns, out of 10,533 Livings in England and Wales, there are only 4413 Residents:—more than 4000 Livings are insufficient to maintain a Minister:—more than 4800 have no fit Residence upon them.

In populous cities thousands are growing up from infancy to manhood who never hear the word of God. It was computed a few years ago, that in a circumference of eight miles, in a population of 1,152,000 inhabitants, more

than 953,000 never could attend public worship in the Establishment. And though Churches have been built since that time, yet has the Population proportionably increased. In one diocese, out of 110,000 persons, the attendants at Church amounted to 19,069, and the communicants to 4,134, about one in seven only attending Church, about one in thirty-eight only attending the Lord's Table. Thus are we still in effect an unchristianized land:—the deepest ignorance and irreligion prevail:—the Gaols are crowded; and your Majesty's Judges, circuit after circuit, are lamenting over the alarming increase of crime.

On the other hand, a Revenue estimated at £300,000 per annum is devoted almost entirely to Sinecures: the ostensible purpose for which it is paid being that of providing Divine Service in about thirty Cathedral and Collegiate Churches.

These two statements placed in juxtaposition sufficiently show the immense misapplication of these large but still inadequate Funds. The principal object of the following Plan is to

apply the superfluity on the one side of this melancholy account, to the deficiencies on the other.

I intreat your Majesty to observe that, though writing on CHURCH REFORM, I have not had the presumption to intermeddle with any theological or controversial point. The subject is, in fact, divided into *Two* distinct and separate heads. The *One* comprises the distribution of the Temporalities of the Church, and the provision for the faithful performance of the duties for which those Temporalities are secured. This is matter of civil regulation, and may not only without impropriety be treated by the Laity, but is expressly within their peculiar and appropriate province.

The *Other* branch of this great question embraces such Reforms as relate to Evils in the Discipline, the Confessionals, or the Ritual of the Church. For these it is not my province to propose the specific remedy—nor do I attempt it. The task is exclusively theological. But the patient, while he looks to the wisdom and experience of the physician for relief, can

give a sufficient description and history of his disease. And therefore to your Majesty, as the Constitutional Head of the Church, and as having the means of calling forth its energies into operation, do I most humbly submit the consideration of the following statement.

It is estimated, SIRE, that in England and Wales there are at least THREE MILLIONS of Protestant Dissenters. In the Principality alone, Dissent has grown to so amazing an extent that its ranks considerably outnumber the Members of the Establishment. It appears from a Return recently published in a work of high reputation,\* that the Dissenting places of worship in Wales at present amount to 1428, while those of the National Church are only 829. The causes of this frightful and growing defection are well deserving of the most serious inquiry. But my present observations are directed exclusively to the relation which our Dissenting Brethren bear to the Anglican Church.

\* Essay on the Causes of Dissent in Wales. Second Edition. By J. A. Johnes, Esq.

These Strangers to the National Communion are at best indifferent to the welfare of the Establishment—most of them are decidedly and upon principle hostile to its very existence. As an aggregate they are daily increasing in numbers, in wealth, in talent, in intelligence, and in power. This is not a satisfactory prospect to the friends of the National Church. And if it be not the evidence of some grievous Error which should be remedied, it at least portends a wide-spreading Calamity which should by all prudent means be averted. The National Standard of Faith is adjusted in such a form, and the National Ritual is so worded, that a large, an influential, and an excellent portion of the community, is unable to reconcile itself to the adoption of them.

I am no advocate for that spurious and mis-called Liberality which can compromise the essence and life of Christianity. One of the first of all duties in the eye of the sincere and true believer, is that of “earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered to the Saints.” He, therefore, can never be so “un-

equally yoked” as to mix with the man who denies the divinity of our Lord, or the mystery of the Triune Jehovah: “For what communion hath light with darkness?” Again: though admitting the Romanist to all civil rights, yet he can never have spiritual fellowship with him, as long as it is his boast and happiness to have escaped from the bondage of an idolatrous and apostate Church, into the glorious liberty of the Children of God. It would also be vain to hope that, under the present dispensation of events, the dissent even of many pious and scriptural men can ever be entirely eradicated. The evils of discord and of schism must remain, as thorns in the sides of the Church, during the whole course of her militant state on earth.

But the subjects and causes of Dissent may surely be confined within narrower limits. Some healing and charitable measures of peace and comprehension may be resorted to in matters of Discipline and Church Government, in Rituals, and those points of Doctrine which are not essential to salvation. We may, to some extent at least, close the breaches and

repair the old waste places. All practical believers in Jesus Christ—all real, vital, experimental Christians are united in the fundamental verities of their common faith. Let them submit to the guidance of true Christian love, and they will have no difficulty in agreeing in such confessionals and rituals as shall, by a clear and uncompromising assertion of Heavenly Truths, at once exclude pernicious heresies, and banish all grounds for doubtful disputations.

My heart's desire, therefore, and prayer to God for Israel is, that those stumbling blocks, which now keep so large a body of our countrymen out of the pale of the Church, should be deeply, impartially, and patiently considered—considered by the fit and proper Tribunal: in the spirit of prayer: in the spirit of Christian love, of peace, of charity, and of conciliation. After such a consideration and revision, and without making one unrighteous or unscriptural concession, the Church will no longer number as opponents, or as strangers, men like Howe, Owen, Baxter, Calamy, Doddridge, Law, Watts, Henry, Lardner, Hall. Such men are the salt



of the earth. No system can be entirely wise or safe which excludes them from its bosom.

The means which may be made instrumental in this great work are ready to your Majesty's hand. It is exclusively a theological and ecclesiastical duty, and no layman can take, or should desire to take, any part in the execution of it. Your Majesty has a Priesthood at command, with which no nation in the world can offer any parallel. Its ranks are teeming with zeal, piety, self-denial, prudence, temper, moderation, talent, erudition;—with all the great and excellent qualities which befit men for high and noble achievements,—except, indeed, perhaps *one*;—but that is a quality which your Majesty, seconded by the wise and religious portion of the nation, is eminently calculated to inspire.—It is *Courage*—that *Courage* which produces the energy and decision, so necessary in new times and difficult emergencies.

I do not presume to point out in what precise manner or mode the Church may be enabled to reform herself: whether by a *Conference*;—by



*a Commission of Divines*;—by the *Renovation of the Convocation*;—or by all these methods, successively, or at once.

The experience which we have had of the first of these, in the Conferences at Hampton Court and the Savoy, forbids us to anticipate any auspicious results from this mode of proceeding. Such Assemblies, says the judicious historian, Rapin, are seldom attended with a happy success: first, because the two parties must be equally animated with the spirit of Peace and Charity, which he shows to be rarely the case. Again, one of the parties is usually superior, and in possession of Power, and therefore not very ready to quit that advantage; and lastly, it often happens that they are granted by the prevailing to the opposite party only to have it said that peace was offered, but rejected.

A Commission like the one of 1689, which empowered ten Bishops and twenty Divines to meet, and prepare alterations in the Liturgy and the Canons, seems a better and a more judicious course. In that Commission we find names whose memory posterity greatly reveres :

—Compton, Lloyd, Burnet, among the bishops: Stillingfleet, Tillotson, Sharpe, Beveridge, Patrick, Kidder, Tennison, among the others. “They were a set of men,” says Archbishop Wake, “than which this Church was never at any one time blessed with either wiser or better since it was a Church; and a design that I am persuaded would have been for the interest and peace of our Church and State, had it been accomplished.”

Its labours however, most unhappily, have never been adopted, but the Record of its proceedings is now in existence in the Archi-Episcopal Library at Lambeth, and is still available. Burnet observes of them, “The corrections which had been agreed to in it would make the whole frame of our Liturgy still more perfect as well as more unexceptionable; and will, I hope, at some time or other, be better entertained than they were then. I am persuaded that they are such as would bring in much the greater part of the Dissenters to the Communion of the Church, and are in themselves desirable, though there were not a Dissenter in the nation.”

The Third mode is the reassembling of the Convocation with a more full and independent representation of the great body of the Clergy, and with the powers and privileges of each House more clearly defined. I take the liberty to refer your Majesty to some high authorities in support of that plan, contained in the following sheets, and to some judicious observations of a contemporary writer in the Appendix.

It has been truly observed of the Church of England, that it differs in a most important particular from the Church of Scotland, and various dissenting bodies, in possessing little or no ecclesiastical power, and no means by which the wisdom and influence of the body can be concentrated. It is “a mighty but a scattered host;—a powerful body, but its power so dissipated as to be unavailing and ineffective—a body threatened with dangers the most urgent and overwhelming, and lying prostrate, helpless, and trembling, for want of union, counsel, and organization.” This evil, it is rightly submitted, may be remedied by the *Revival and Restoration of the Convocation*.

To what extent your Majesty's personal and kingly duties, and your Majesty's Christian responsibility are involved in this important matter, is clearly set forth in the following admirable observations of Archbishop Wake. "I shall not doubt to affirm," says that temperate and judicious divine, "that whenever the King is *in his own conscience* convinced, that for the Convocation to sit, and act, would be for the glory of God, the benefit of the Church, or otherwise for the public good and welfare of his realm, he is obliged, both *by the Law of Reason, as a Man,—by his duty to God as a Christian,—and his duty to his People as a Ruler, set over them for their good*, to permit, or rather to command his Clergy to meet in Convocation, and transact what is fit, for any or all those ends, to be done by them.".... "When the exigencies of the Church call for a Convocation—if the Prince be sensible of this, and yet will not suffer the Clergy to come together; in that case I do acknowledge that he would abuse the trust that is lodged in him, and deny the Church a benefit which of right it ought to enjoy."

Your Majesty is on a proud and fortunate eminence: you have wonderfully endeared yourself to all ranks, by your frank, manly, and constitutional bearing: and the nation is justly grateful for the prosperous fulfilment of its hopes. You have been “careful for us with all this care” in Temporal matters, deign now to consider our wants in Spiritual. Your Majesty has the means before you of remedying immense Evil, and of promoting extensive Good—*Evil* which is corroding the vitals of Christianity—*Good* to perishing and immortal souls. The Reformation has never been completed in this country. The untimely death of King Edward the Sixth interrupted that holy work in its progress; and events, familiar to every reader of English history, have in various ways impeded its completion. It is in your Majesty’s power to put the last hand to this glorious Edifice; to become the Josiah of modern times; to tread in the footsteps of the devout and godly Youth who walked with Cranmer and Ridley. The personal influence possessed by a British Sovereign, independent of his defined and constitutional powers, is extensive, and not least

so in ecclesiastical matters. Here, therefore, is one of many Talents committed to your Majesty's charge. May you be inspired from above to make the proper use of it. Your Majesty will hereafter be asked by *One*, who (as the excellent Bishop Kenn faithfully reminded Charles the Second on his death-bed) is no Respector of Persons, how you have employed this Talent? It is my humble, earnest, dutiful, and, if I may presume to add, my affectionate prayer, that your Majesty may be enabled to return to that Enquiry an Answer of Peace.

I conclude with the almost dying words of that burning and shining light, John Wesley, "Oh, Lord, bless the Church and the King!"

I have the honour to be,

SIRE,

Your Majesty's most faithful and  
loyal Servant and Subject,

HENLEY.

LONDON,  
*August 22, 1832.*

## CHURCH REFORM.



A CONVICTION has for some time been gaining ground among the best friends of the Church, that several Corruptions exist in it, which secularize and debase its spirit, contract the sphere of its usefulness, and loosen its hold on the affections and veneration of the People. They consider that its well-being depends upon a timely and judicious Correction of Abuses, which some affirm to be of such a nature and magnitude, as to threaten its existence as an Establishment. And it is frequently declared that the time has arrived, when the appointed Guardians of its Interests, should come forward with some more extensive and some more vital measure of Reformation, than any which has yet been communicated to the Country.

Many, however, of the wise and good, while they are deeply conscious of the existence of these evils, are, nevertheless, afraid to countenance an efficacious Plan of Reform, lest the whole of the venerable fabric be endangered in the process of its reparation. A sentiment just, prudent, and righteous, and entitled to the most

respectful and the most affectionate deference. The problem, therefore, which is to be solved is this:—Whether, on the one hand, the evils complained of, are really so considerable that we ought to encounter the dangers which attend all extensive alterations, and remove them; or, whether we shall stand absolved before God, in permitting them to continue, although no better defence of them can be adduced, than the difficulty and hazard of their removal.

This is a question of great importance to the present and eternal welfare of thousands; and it must be determined by no lower authority than that one unerring test by which all human transactions ought to be tried:—The Will of God, either expressly declared or necessarily implied in His revealed Word. All other modes of solving or evading it—all reference to maxims of mere worldly policy and expediency—all reliance on human wisdom, foresight, or learning, will only lead us into error, imperfection, and mistake. A narrow or unscriptural defence of the Establishment, will accelerate the downfall of its fair and noble bulwarks.

The writer of these pages, therefore, desires to approach this question with that spirit of charity, and that singleness of purpose, which befit so serious an inquiry. Had the task which he has undertaken appeared to demand the acquirements of the Statesman or of the Philosopher, he



would have shrunk from it with the deepest conviction of his incapacity for it. Still less would he have presumed to interfere with the peculiar province of the Divine, by intermeddling with the principles and doctrines of the Church, with her Creeds, her Articles, or her Liturgy. Least of all is he disposed to join in any of the low-minded and ignorant censures of the clergy, which are too general in the present day. He feels perfectly assured that there never was a period when most of the high offices in the Church have been filled with so much learning, zeal, activity and munificence, and (what is worth them all) with so sincere a desire to promote God's Honour and Glory. In the lower ranks of the clergy, and most especially in the rising generation, there is so much purity and holiness of life and morals, so sincere a setting forth of Evangelical Truth, so strenuous a desire to perform the works of a laborious and watchful ministry, as to justify us in anticipating a great National Revival in Religion.

Nor are the following pages dictated by any grudging feeling towards the Endowments and Wealth of the Establishment. On the contrary, the Author thinks that it can never be too often repeated, that *the Church of England is not a wealthy Church*. It has been stated from high authority, and has never been contradicted, that if all the reve-

nues of the parochial clergy were equally divided amongst them, there would not be more than £185 per annum for each : and that if the whole property of the Church, including all that belongs to Deans and Chapters, were thrown into a common fund, it would not furnish a net annual stipend of £350 to each of the working clergy. But even if it were found greatly to exceed this amount, he never would consent, upon any reasoning, however plausible, to see the smallest portion of it subtracted from the service of the Sanctuary.

The present time also appears to be peculiarly fitted for a deep and calm consideration of this momentous subject. It requires, indeed, but little experience to be “well aware, that Power rarely reforms itself.” “So, indeed, it is,” said Mr. Burke, “when all is quiet around it.” But may it not be hoped, that a due attention on the part of those in whose hands the issues of this question are placed, to the state and prospects of society, may for once make an exception to this undoubted rule? When they observe the voice of the nation demanding in every public functionary, a higher degree of zeal and purity and public virtue: when abuses are no longer deemed sacred because they are venerable, nor improvements rejected as rash because they are extensive, may they not be induced to do “early and from foresight,” and with due caution, and temper, and deliberation, that which every pru-

dent man perceives must be soon done in one way or another?

Let us hope that these considerations, and the recollection of the mistakes which have been committed in so long resisting the desires of a nation thirsting for improvement and reformation, may make those who ride upon the high places of the earth, more humble and tolerant, more attentive to the just demands of the governed, more observant of those claims which the varying condition of society is daily advancing. How obvious was it to all temperate and impartial spectators, that, as soon as Parliament had recovered from the agitation of the Catholic Question, the first subject that would occupy its attention would be that of Parliamentary Reform. How moderate were then the demands of its most ardent advocates: how slight the concessions which would have satisfied the just expectations of the nation! And yet with what pertinacity were the most temperate alterations resisted, and how wide and extensive, and in the judgment of many how hazardous, is the measure which this pertinacity has produced!

Let us, therefore, take warning from our past experience. It is impossible to regard the temper of the nation and of the times, without being convinced that as soon as the subject which now engrosses its attention has been satisfactorily adjusted, one of the first questions agi-

tated in the Reformed Parliament, will be the extent and nature and application of the Revenues of the Church. It therefore behoves every sincere friend of our venerable Establishment to prepare for that conflict which most assuredly awaits her; and to see that she is able to give an account of her stewardship, and of the application of those Talents which the piety and munificence of our ancestors have committed to her hands.

If, in the result of an Enquiry, instituted in a humble and kind spirit, and with a sincere desire of attaining to the truth, some portion of error, imperfection, and abuse, be discovered, it will be her wisest policy, as it is her bounden duty, to lose not a moment in putting away all Evils and Corruptions. A superficial, slight, and palliative expedient, will neither satisfy the zeal and love of her friends, nor disarm the rancour of her enemies. The nation will demand a sound, an honest, and above all, a Religious Reformation. A Reformation springing from a deep conviction of the extent and sinfulness of the Corruptions which prevail, and conducted with high and holy aspirations after Christian Purity and Excellence. A Reformation adopted in obedience to God's Word and Will, and conducted in subordination to that heavenly standard.

The most prominent Evil in the Church, is the

## Non-Residence of the Beneficed Clergy and the System of Pluralities.

To what extent the system of *Non Residence* prevails in our Church, it is sufficient to observe, that by the Parliamentary Return of 1827, out of 10,533, the total number of Benefices in England and Wales, the number of Residents is only 4413, and the total number of Non Residents doing their duty is 1590. By a Return of the same year of the number of Resident and licensed Curates, it appears that of the Livings where the Incumbents are Non Resident, there are 1223 which are of the annual value of £300 and upwards.

This Non-Residence is of two sorts, that which is voluntary and that which is involuntary. The former exists where two or more pieces of preferment, *of which one is sufficient for the decent support of a minister*, are held by the same individual. The latter is caused by the insufficiency of the value of Benefices, or by the want of a proper Residence, or, as is too often the case, by both united.

The guilt of the *first* of these evils must be shared by the Patrons who institute: the Incumbents who accept: in some cases, it is said, by Bishops, some of whom being unavoidably and most blamelessly pluralists themselves, are unwilling to enforce the law even in its present moderate degree of efficiency: and lastly, by the

Nation that has tolerated so imperfect and vicious a system. The guilt of the *second* is exclusively national, and we will now proceed to consider how both may be wiped away.

It is true that they are not both of them productive of equal mischief; for the absence of the Beneficed Pluralist is supplied by the presence and ministration of the Curate. Much has been said, and justly said, of the zeal, the fidelity, and the piety of this admirable class of men: but it is unnecessary to multiply arguments to show, that no virtue or talent on the part of the Curate, can be equivalent to the constant presence and personal superintendence of the Beneficed Superior.

Nothing, in fact, evinces so strongly how much wiser the children of this world are in their generation than the children of light, as the strictness with which mankind compel the performance of duties upon which their secular and pecuniary interests depend, as compared with the vague and languid attention which they are satisfied to exact from those, to whom spiritual and eternal concerns are entrusted. In what department, either of public or private trust, except the Church, has the system of executing important functions by deputy ever been extensively permitted? Yet most other professions are equally

\* "That men should live of the flock that they do not feed," says Bacon, "or of the altar at which they not serve, is a



overstocked with candidates for employment, as competent to discharge the duties of all stations in those professions as any of the actual possessors of them, and who would willingly consent to perform those duties for a quarter, an eighth, or a tenth of the remuneration appointed for them. But who could endure to hear of a judge or stipendiary magistrate, a confidential manager or clerk in a great public or private office, a medical attendant on a hospital or infirmary, delegating, without scruple on his own part, and without instant remonstrance on the part of those who were interested to compel his services, the entire performance of all his duties to a substitute, whom he might reward with a small fraction of his own stipulated emoluments? Yet that which would be thought so intolerable an abuse where public health, or justice, or worldly interests alone are concerned, is not only endured, but frequently and strenuously defended, where no less a confidence is reposed, than the care of the present holiness and eternal welfare of hundreds. This is an evil which cannot be tolerated. We ask only for God, what man exacts for man. If the excellence and merits of the deputy are not permitted, in earthly trusts, to justify the absence and neglect

thing that hardly can receive just defence; and to exercise the office of a pastor in matter of the word and doctrine *by deputies*, is a thing not warranted."—*Pacification of the Church*.

of the principal, neither let them have that effect in heavenly.

The admirable and conscientious Bishop Burnet, in his Valedictory Address to his Church and Country, uses the following indignant remonstrance on this subject. " I do not enter into the scandalous practices of non-residence and pluralities, which are sheltered by so many colours of law among us; whereas the Church of Rome, from which we had those and many other abuses, has freed herself from this, under which we still labour, to our great and just reproach. How long, how long shall this be the peculiar disgrace of our Church, which, for aught I know, is the only Church in the world that tolerates it?"\*

No measure of Church Reform can sustain

\* His biographer relates of him, that he was a warm and constant enemy to Pluralities, used his utmost endeavours to prevent them, and in some cases even hazarded a suspension rather than give institution. In his charges to the Clergy he exclaimed against them as a sacrilegious robbery of the Revenues of the Church: a remarkable effect of his zeal is thus related. In his first visitation at Salisbury he urged the authority of St. Bernard, who, being consulted by one of his followers whether he might not accept of two Benefices, replied, " And how will you be able to serve them both ?" " I intend," answered the Priest, " to officiate in one of them by a deputy." " Will your deputy be damned for you ?" said the saint. " Believe me, you may serve your cure by proxy, but you must be damned in person." This expression so affected Mr. Kelsey, a pious and worthy Clergyman, then present, that he immediately resigned the Rectory of Bemerton, which he then held, with one of greater value.



any pretension to the consideration of the country which does not, *with a due regard to vested interests*, put an end to this evil and corrupt system. This may be done by a short Act of Parliament of one clause, which should declare a certain annual amount (£400 for instance) to be the minimum which should be deemed adequate for the support of a Minister: and then should enact, that no Benefice of that value should ever be tenable with any other Preferment whatsoever. Nor should there be any distance within which two livings can be held, whether such distance be 30 or 45 miles. To lodge a power of dispensation for this purpose in any human hands, however pure and holy, is to act on an unsound and unscriptural principle. The great object of legislation on this subject should be to secure to each parish the daily, constant, and personal attention of a man who shall have no other public duty, but that of watching over the souls of his flock, as one who is to give account. His quiet week-day ministrations may be made a thousand times more profitable to their souls and bodies than the most spiritual of his Sabbath duties. “A house-going minister,” says Dr. Chalmers, “wins for himself a Church-going people. And his week-day attentions and their Sabbath attendance, go hand in hand.” These he is as effectually prevented from fulfilling by an absence of *ten* as of *an hundred* miles.

Let us now proceed to consider how the case stands with respect to the Non-Residence which is involuntary.

The Parliamentary Return of 1815 states the total amount of Livings under the annual value of £150 per annum to be 4361. Of these, some are under £12 per annum, and no less a number than 1350 are below £70 per annum.

Besides the Non-Residence thus unavoidably produced by the extreme poverty of the Benefices, the want of proper Residences operates in an equal degree in causing that evil. There are no less than 4809 Livings upon which a clergyman cannot reside. Of these 2626 have no houses at all. On 2183 there are houses unfit for the residence of a clergyman, let at £2 or £3 per annum, and worth no more.

The consequences of this great and deplorable desecration are obvious. In many parishes Divine Service is only performed once in three weeks or a month. The week-day intercourse and natural influence of the Pastor are never known. From the distance of his residence, and the multiplicity of his avocations, and the necessary infrequency of his visits, he is as effectually a stranger to his Parishioners as if he lived in another hemisphere.

But great as are these evils, which from their nature are confined to less populous and agricultural districts, the want of religious instruction

weighs with a tenfold oppression in our crowded cities. A population has risen up in our manufacturing districts which our Churches cannot hold, and neither our own ministers nor the indefatigable exertions of Dissenters can adequately instruct. A mass of ignorance, heathenism, and crime is thus fostered, which threatens the country with the most alarming consequences. Much, indeed, has been done during the last ten years in building new Churches. But the misfortune is, that they are most wanted in those very places where the people are either unable or unwilling to pay for the endowment of them. The following extract from Dr. Yates's valuable work sets this in a striking light:—

“ In a district containing by one estimation a population of 1,144,779, and by another 1,129,451, the astonishing truth is most incontrovertibly established, that only 81 parish Churches and 81 Ministers are provided by the Church of England for a population of upwards of 1,110,000 souls. The indubitable authority of Parliament hath, indeed, demonstrated that within the comparatively small circle of about ten miles around the metropolis of Britain,—the splendid seat of Science, Literature, Commerce, Legislation, Philosophy, and (as is supposed) Religion,—no less a number than 977,000 souls are shut out from the common Pastoral offices of the National Religion;—are without any beneficial communion with the Established Church,—receive no instruction from a Parish Minister,—and are totally excluded from the inestimable advantages of Parochial Public Worship.”

Dr. Chalmers mentions that it was found, upon an investigation made into the subject in the city of Glasgow, that in its most populous parish not one-fifth of those who lived in it, and not one-third of those who *should* have sittings, were in the habit of attendance on any ordinances whatever. Who can doubt but that if a like inquiry were made into the recesses of St. Giles's, Bethnal Green, Stepney, Spitalfields, or extended to Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Wakefield, Halifax, Huddersfield, Wolverhampton, and our other immense and overgrown masses of population, it would be attended with a similar result. Well does that eloquent Christian Philanthropist observe,—

“ that when we contemplate the magnitude of those suburb wastes which have formed so rapidly around the metropolis and every commercial city of our land—when we think of the quantity of lawless spirit which has been permitted to ferment and to multiply there, afar from the contact of every softening influence, and without one effectual hand put forth to stay the great and the growing distemper—when we estimate the families which from infancy to manhood have been unvisited by any message from Christianity, and on whose consciences the voice of Him who speaketh the word from Heaven, has never descended, we cannot but charge that country which, satisfied if it neutralize the violence, rears no preventive barrier against the vices of the people, with the guilt of inflicting upon itself a moral and political suicide.”\*

\* Christian and Civil Economy of Large Towns, Vol. I. p. 112.

It seems astonishing that this great and understanding nation, should permit such a continual violation of the spirit and letter of Christianity to exist in its very bosom. That while so many thousands are annually raised by voluntary subscription to send forth Missionaries into the remotest corners of the world, we should dole out the revenues of the National Church in so unequal a manner, that more than 4000 of its districts are unable to support a Minister in the decent habits and respectability of a gentleman. And that while we have millions at home who are living in total alienation from the sanctions and comforts of religion, we should “sow beside all waters” except those whose borders have the first claims for our culture.

“These things ought not so to be,” and if there were no overgrown and unwieldy Endowments in the Church; if there were no sinecures, the existence of which brings discredit on the Establishment, no payments utterly disproportionate to any service that is rendered for them, these details would have established a right to require the Legislature to devote a grant, or a series of annual grants, to this great exigency.

“For,” as observed by Lord Bacon, “all the Parliaments since the 27th and 31st of Henry VIII., who gave away Impropriations from the Church, seem to stand in a sort obnoxious and obliged to God in conscience to do somewhat for the Church

to reduce the patrimony thereof to a competence. For since they have debarred Christ's wife of a great part of her dowry, it were reason they made her a competent jointure."

The Legislature cannot be too frequently reminded, in looking at our 4,000 almost unendowed Benefices, and our 4,800 houseless livings, that, in the language of the same illustrious person, "It is a constitution of the Divine Law, from which human laws cannot derogate, that those which feed the flock should live of the flock; that those that serve at the altar should live at the altar; that those which dispense spiritual things should reap spiritual things; of which it is also an appendix that the proportion of the maintenance be not small or necessitous, but plentiful and liberal."

If therefore the time shall ever arrive when no revenues are paid except such as are fit for the just and legitimate dignity of the Hierarchy, and when no stipend is received but in return for some adequate amount of service done to the cause of religion, it is clear that Parliament may properly be called upon to supply all deficiencies.

In the mean time, we must remember that the Endowments of the Church are property given for a special purpose. They are the subject of a great Trust for the maintenance and service of Religion. And whether we regard the Church in the abstract as one vast corporation, or in a more



technical point of view, as an aggregate of corporations, she must equally be considered as a trustee invested with the management and control of funds, given for the discharge of a duty of the very highest and holiest nature. And, if by time, or accident, or neglect, or by the rise or improvement of property, or by the increase of population, any material impediment shall have arisen to prevent the due performance of this trust, it is the clear right and bounden duty of the Legislature to enforce its faithful execution. And if this cannot be effected except by some change in the channel through which the fund is transmitted, notwithstanding all objections to extensive alterations, yet such alterations must inevitably be effected. It would, indeed, be injustice and tyranny to abridge the life income of any individual; but when the highest interests of the community, and the strong call of religion, unite with the clear will of the donor, in pointing out the necessity of an alteration in the specific mode of effecting his intentions, there should no longer be any doubt of the justice, or of the propriety, of varying any existing mode of distribution as to all subsequent objects of his bounty. No one now maintains the inviolability of corporate rights, where a clear case of public necessity or expediency demands their sacrifice. And when the first of all duties, and the most urgent of all necessities, call for an alteration in the applica-

tion of public property, it would be preposterous to contend, that the embryo rights of any number of unappointed or unborn functionaries, can legitimately interpose to prevent a just or necessary measure of Reform.

There is, therefore, not only an undoubted right in the Legislature, but it is its duty to vary the application and transmission of the property of the Church, whenever the interests of religion manifestly demand it. Let us, then, now proceed to consider, whether any of the revenues of the Church, as at present constituted, are so applied as to justify this proposed Legislative interference with them.

The Endowments of the Church may be divided into three parts. 1st, That of the Parochial Clergy, consisting of the Tithes, Glebes, Fees, &c. 2dly. The Revenues of the Bishops. And 3dly, The Property of the Deans and Chapters and Collegiate Churches.

1. Let us first consider the Revenues of the Parochial Clergy.

The Revenue arising from the First Fruits and Tenths, which was originally an exaction of the Pope, and which was transferred at the Reformation to the Crown, was appropriated by Queen Anne to the relief of the poorer Clergy. All livings under £50 per annum were discharged from the payment of them; and the Revenue arising



from the First Fruits and Tenths of all Benefices above that value, was applied to the augmentation of those below it. The Valuation under which these are paid was made in the 26 Henry VIII. A.D. 1535, and the average clear annual Income of the Fund amounts to £10,000, the operation of which must be obviously extremely slow, and indeed hardly perceptible. It has, accordingly, been frequently proposed that a new Valuation should be made, by which the payment of Tenths should become more real than it is at present; that a graduated scale might be agreed upon, while many small Livings might be discharged altogether; and every Living above a certain value might be taxed according to its income: as it is said to be obvious, that an Incumbent of £1000 a year could much better afford to pay a Ninth, than an Incumbent of £300 a year could pay a Tenth.

When this subject was considered so long ago as the year 1810, Lord Harrowby, in a very valuable pamphlet on the Augmentation of Poor Livings, adduced reasons in opposition to this scheme, which ought to have set the agitation of it at rest for ever. Besides the important consideration of the hardship of it, he showed clearly that it would be an act of gross injustice. When nearly three centuries have elapsed during which this tax has been considered as invariable, when so large a number of Livings have become private property, and have passed for a valuable considera-

tion from one purchaser to another on the faith of the invariability of this tax, a fresh valuation, for the purpose of increasing the tax, would be an arbitrary seizure of vested estates, in order to throw upon a particular class of Proprietors that burthen which ought to be borne in common. It must be observed, too, that the notions which have been hitherto entertained as to the magnitude of Livings are very erroneous. It is estimated, that there are not at present four Livings in England worth £4000 a year, nor thirty worth £2000 a year. Those, which in high times were worth £2500 per annum, are now worth £1200.

Besides it is obvious, that, except in very thinly inhabited districts, no revenue can be more justly bestowed, nor will in all probability be more beneficially expended, than a liberal income in the hands of a clergyman residing nine months in a year upon his benefice; and it would be one of the greatest blessings that could be bestowed upon the country, if, wherever there was a population of 1500 or 2000 souls, a beneficed clergyman with an Endowment of from £800 to £1200 per annum were placed in the midst of it. And any scheme tending to diminish such an income by a ninth, or a tenth, would, in no inconsiderable degree, diminish that influence both upon the temporal and spiritual interests of a numerous population, which it is highly desirable should be possessed by its minister. The higher degree of moral and religious attainment

of the agricultural classes in Scotland, is doubtless owing to the greater extent of comfort diffused among their clergy, which promotes their more strict and general residence.\*

As to *First Fruits*, a scale has also been suggested under which they may be made more productive: but here we must again refer to the sound and practical observations of Lord Harrowby, which, in addition to the arguments against any increase of Tenths, apply so forcibly to this species of payment as to justify us in proposing the almost total abolition of it. “The First Fruits,” says his Lordship, “even as they are now collected, are a heavy imposition. Upon the higher classes of the Clergy, they are, at their present amount, considerable. They fall to be paid at a time when the payment is particularly inconvenient. The acquisition of preferment is in itself expensive. A house to be furnished—an establishment to be formed or enlarged—the removal of a family—are all sources of expense, which drain the purse of a man upon his first appointment. Debts are incurred, which press heavily upon him at his outset, and perhaps involve him

\* There are no Livings in Scotland under £150 per annum; and only one-fifth of the Livings poor, whereas there are two-fifths of the English Livings so. The Scotch parsonage-houses are kept in repair by the landowners; and if all the property of the Scotch Church were put together it would give £270 to each Living, which, in many parts of Scotland, is as much as £400 or £500 a year in many parts of England.

in embarrassments equally hurtful to his credit and his comfort. The income is at best only for life, and does not afford the resources which arise from more permanent revenue. Death, if it follows soon after preferment, leaves a family destitute.

“ If these evils are in any degree felt, as they certainly are, while the first-fruits are paid upon the present low scale of valuation, they would be utterly intolerable if that valuation were made according to the real value of the benefice. A man would be left without any income for a whole twelvemonth; and that twelvemonth would be the very time when his expenses would be increased.”

These considerations, it may be submitted, are quite sufficient to shew, that no material augmentation can be derived, from the Revenues of the Parochial Clergy.

2dly. The next division of Ecclesiastical Property is the Revenues of the Bishops. The aggregate is stated by the best authorities to be at present about £163,000 per annum. The Revenues of some of the Sees, indeed, will probably in a few years be considerably increased; but still, the just and necessary expenses of a bishop are so considerable, that it would be a great error to expect, that any addition could be obtained to the funds of the Church, by deductions from the Revenues of the Hierarchy.

3dly. The last species of property is that of the Deans and Chapters and Collegiate Churches.

Of Chapters there are the like number as of Bishops, there being one attached to every See. In addition to this there are Collegiate Churches, like Westminster, Windsor, Southwell, Ripon, Manchester, Brecon, and Wolverhampton. The number of dignitaries is usually stated at about 600, with stipends varying from mere nominal sums to incomes of a very large amount; the highest of all being about £8000 per annum. The total Revenues of the whole body is stated by Dr. Cove, who wrote some years ago, at about £275,000, but authors who have written subsequently, estimate the amount at about £300,000 per annum.\*

This is a revenue considerably exceeding one-sixth of the estimated income of all the Parochial Clergy of England and Wales; and it becomes material, in prosecution of our investigation, to inquire, what the services are, in return for which so large an amount of income is paid. These services will be found to be fully comprised in

\* There appears to be great doubt as to the correctness of this estimate; but as my plan proposes (after providing for Divine Service in cathedrals) to appropriate the *whole of the surplus revenue*, it becomes unnecessary to ascertain its precise amount. If it turns out to be greater than was expected, there will still be abundant room in England and Wales for appropriating *the whole of it*; if less, there will be the less reason for applying any part of it in sinecures.

the following catalogue:—a stated number of days and nights passed in the residence: a certain number of attendances at morning and evening service on week days; and in some cathedrals a few sermons on Sundays and Festivals.

The period of residence is adjusted in a most capricious and mischievous mode. It lately appeared in the course of a discussion in the House of Lords, that in one Chapter, a Prebendary, from the circumstance of being Sub-dean, might be compelled to an uninterrupted residence of twelve consecutive months, and, accordingly, an active and very valuable person was taken, (under the baneful system of Pluralities,) from one of the most extensive and interesting scenes of Christian exertion in the metropolis, to waste his energies for several months in a country town on a comparative sinecure. In some Chapters the requisite residence is three months, in others two, and often only one. In some again, it should appear that even this is not required. The late Earl of Bridgewater drew the magnificent income of one of the Golden Stalls of Durham while living at Paris. And in another Chapter it is possible for a person never even to have seen the inside of the cathedral since the day he read himself in, and to have been in the receipt of an income equal to eight or ten small Livings for upwards of a quarter of a century, without performing any one duty of office whatsoever.



Many of these individuals are, indisputably, valuable and diligent labourers, who in other places, and in other modes, have rendered or are rendering good service to the Church. But here they have no sphere or means of usefulness. They are connected with no poor, who look up to them as their protectors and guides; they have no sick and dying to pray with; no children to catechize; no flock towards whom the sympathies and affections of a Pastor can be called forth. The most important offering to God's glory and service, is a formal attendance on a cold and pompous ceremonial.

There are usually two arguments adduced in support of this vicious system. 1st, It is said that it is necessary to have *Sinecures as a temptation to Men of Family to enter the Church*, by which means religion is brought home to the higher classes, and the Church obtains a support and an acknowledgment which is of great benefit to the cause of Religion. Now this object, the importance of which, however, has been somewhat overrated, may be most amply and effectually secured to any profession, by establishing in it a few splendid prizes of honour and emolument, which may tempt into it men of various qualifications, whether such qualifications be those of birth and family connection, or others, of an intrinsically higher and nobler order. But it will neither be effectually nor cre-



ditably attained, by the institution of sinecures. If the object of a candidate for Holy Orders be to vegetate upon a sinecure, whatever be his rank, and connection, he will at best be nothing more than a dead weight upon the Church. And in most cases the Church would be better without him; for the more elevated his birth, the more conspicuous will be the scandal of his inefficiency.

The other argument in favour of Sinecures in the Church is, that it is necessary to have them *as a Reward and Support to learned men*. As far as this applies to the sustentation of secular learning, it must be distinctly controverted. As long as one Benefice remains without a resident Pastor, or one mass of population without the appointed means of grace, any such application of the funds of the Church is a direct misappropriation of them. But as far as it respects those eminent individuals, who serve the cause of religion by their theological attainments and by the exercise of their pens, the argument bears a very different aspect.

The first impulse, indeed, of zeal and piety might be tempted to assert, that, the Gospel being essentially and emphatically, though not exclusively, a message to the Poor, the very highest degrees of talent or erudition are neither necessary nor available for its promulgation; and therefore that the State will have sufficiently performed the

duty incumbent upon it of supporting Christianity, when it shall have provided for the maintenance of an adequate number of teachers, sufficiently gifted to make a sound and wholesome impression on the understandings of the common race of mankind; and that the description of persons to whom funds given for the service of religion are applicable, must be confined to the Parochial Clergy and those who superintend and direct them.

But it would not be difficult to demonstrate that however well meaning and pious this view of the question may be, yet that it is infinitely too narrow and contracted. We may safely affirm, that all which is expended in securing a highly "lettered and intellectual Church" is literally expended in the Promotion of Christianity and in the Propagation of the Gospel.

"It is to the learning of the Priesthood," observes Dr. Chalmers, "that Christianity has kept her ground on the high platform of cultivated and well-educated humanity, and that she enters so largely as a bright and much esteemed ingredient into the body of our national literature. It is well when this degree of respect and acknowledgment can be obtained for her among the upper classes of life; and more especially in every free and enlightened nation like our own, where the reigning authority is so much under the guidance of the higher reason of the country, it is of unspeakable benefit that Christianity should have been so nobly upheld by the talent and erudition of her advocates. The fostering hand of the Legislature would soon have been withheld from

all our Christian Institutions, had the Christian system not been palpably recommended by those numerous pleadings wherewith a schooled and accomplished Clergy have so enriched the theological literature of our island.”\*

But the argument for Sinecures drawn from the necessity of encouraging learning, will, on closer examination, appear to have no greater weight in it, than the like argument when applied to the expediency of enticing men of birth into the Church. It proves very satisfactorily the benefit of an opulent endowment, but not at all the necessity of sinecures. To tempt commanding talents and strenuous industry into the service of the Church, it is enough to hold out those splendid prizes which we have already alluded to. And the lustre of such prizes will in no degree be impaired, because the enjoyment of

\* The same wise and admirable person observes in another place—“ There are many who look with an evil eye to the endowments of the English Church, and to the indolence of her dignitaries. But to that Church the theological literature of our nation stands indebted for her best acquisitions; and we hold it a refreshing spectacle at any time that meagre Socinianism pours forth a new supply of flippancies and errors, when we behold, as we have often done, an armed champion come forth, in full equipment, from some high and lettered retreat of that noble hierarchy; nor can we grudge her the wealth of all her endowments, when we think how well, under her venerable auspices, the battles of orthodoxy have been fought—that in this holy warfare they are her sons and her scholars who are ever foremost in the field—ready at all times to face the threatening mischief, and by the weight of their ponderous erudition to overturn it.”

them is attended with much immediate devotion of labour and of time. And these prizes, as they have been the temptation to such men, so will they in most instances be their appropriate remuneration or support. A profound and successful pursuit of ecclesiastical and universal literature till the age of forty or forty-five, will best qualify men of eminent talents to sustain with dignity and efficiency the various duties of the Episcopal Office, and then will that office be their best remuneration. On the other hand, we have many bright examples which show, that the most conscientious and laborious devotion to the details of duty, does not prevent the acquisition of new triumphs in the paths of Christian authorship, and then the Office becomes the fit and proper maintenance of such valuable Labourers. Nor is it probable that the same application to theology in the earlier period of life, will unfit the generality of able men from mixing in the active and evangelizing labors of Parochial Ministration. The result therefore is, that the existence of Sinecures, can only be defended, as a maintenance for that very small portion of the theological world, which consists of retired Students, fitted neither for Episcopal nor for Parochial Duties. A list so minute, that it would hardly have been necessary in a new system to have provided for them at all, but who in that fresh arrangement and distribution

of Church Property which is here proposed, can be most amply remunerated, without any material violation of the grand principle of that arrangement.

But whatever may be the value in theory of this latter argument for Sinecures, it will be found to have had little real operation in practice. If any one turns to the list of the Dignitaries of our Cathedrals, he will find, that not more than one twentieth of them, have had any claims to preferment on the ground of theological or even of literary attainments. Parliamentary Interest, Family Connections, or Party Gratitude, have in general filled up all vacancies as they have arisen, with the Sons, the Brothers and the Tutors of Ministers and of their adherents. This species of Patronage has generally been considered, to use the language of an able writer in a valuable periodical publication, "only as so much oil for greasing the wheels of Government, that the machine of state may roll on more smoothly." Widely, he observes, as the several parties who have governed the country for the last century have differed in other things, they have all agreed to regard the Church as a source of Patronage, which might fairly be employed either for the gratification of private partiality or the purchase of so much Parliamentary support.\*

It is the object of the following Plan to suggest

\* Blackwood's Magazine, Feb. 1832.

those alterations which the present state of the Church and the strong feeling of all serious and right-thinking men demonstrate to be necessary. And more particularly to secure that greatest of all desiderata, the Residence of the Clergy, by a more equitable division and arrangement of Church property, and by the gradual abolition of Pluralities.

It is clear, from what has been already premised, that the augmentation of small Livings and the Endowment of Churches in poor and populous places, can only be effected by the application of some portion of Cathedral property: the other Endowments of the Church being in one case insufficient, and in the other barely adequate, to the present demands upon them.\*

The plan which is here submitted proposes to vest all Episcopal and Chapter Estates in the hands of a Corporation for the exclusive management and controul of this species of Ecclesiastical property. It might not, at first, appear necessary to include in this arrangement the Estates of the Bishops, as no revenue is proposed to be subtracted from the Sees. But it is admitted on all hands, that one of the objects most urgently demanded in a measure of Church Reform, is the

\* Those, however, who think that a considerable revenue may nevertheless be raised from the Tithes and First Fruits, should be reminded that a plan for that purpose is fully compatible with mine.



equalization of the Bishoprics, in order to put an end to the great but now necessary evil of Comendams, and the temptation to Translations. And although this might be adequately effected by leaving the administration of the property in the hands in which it is now placed, and by merely remodelling the application of the aggregate of the Revenues according to certain proportions to be fixed by a new Act of Parliament, yet as an efficient machinery will have been already constituted for the Chapter Estates, and the other arguments, which will hereafter be noticed, demonstrate its applicability to Episcopal property, it is here adduced as a measure of fitness and expediency, though not as a matter of so much urgency and necessity, as it appears to be with respect to the Chapter property.

This Board should be a mixed body, consisting of a certain number of salaried, and a certain number of honorary members. The minute details of duty are rarely very efficiently performed by persons who act gratuitously: a sufficient degree of responsibility is not created to secure at all times that laboriousness and attention to detail, which is required and enforced from a paid agent. On the other hand, it is desirable to obtain the occasional attendance and general inspection of persons in eminent stations, both in Church and State, who will give a stability and



weight to the Corporation, and be a guarantee for the uprightness and purity of its transactions.

The first object in every alteration of this nature should be the preservation of the perfect inviolability of all life interests. No Sinecure, or Pluralities, no Dispensation from residence, no excessive and disproportionate amount of Revenue, however objectionable in principle, must be interfered with, as against the present possessors. The plan, therefore, commences by providing that the interests, which are to vest in the corporation, shall only do so on the death or resignation of these persons. This arrangement, besides the justice of it, will also be highly expedient, as it will prevent the Commissioners from being clogged with too much business in the outset, and give them time to become acquainted with the nature of the property which they will have to manage, and to ascertain in what places and districts the surplus revenues can be most beneficially applied.

In the administration of the Cathedral property, and the reformation of the Chapters, the first consideration which naturally arises, is, that due provision be made for the celebration of Cathedral Service. For this purpose, (as one great object will be the abolition of every thing approaching to a sinecure that can be dispensed with,) it will be found most convenient to entrust the performance of divine service exclusively

to the Dean,\* assisted by such a number of Chaplains as shall be deemed necessary. As his residence will be for nine months in the year, he should perform the same quantity of public duty as the incumbents of our great London Livings. But as there will be no occasional duty, no Registers to be kept, no vestries to attend, no visiting of the poor and sick, his labours will be extremely slight. The plan provides very liberal stipends for these dignitaries, and therefore the Deaneries may be considered as the Reward or the Support of those classes of learned men already alluded to, whom it may be found more proper to advance in this mode, than by either Episcopal or Parochial Preferment. Nor can the provision be deemed too meagre and niggardly, which contains thirty-two pieces of preferment, of amount varying according to population and cheapness of living, from £1000 to £1800 per annum. To this must be added, six out of the eight stalls of the Cathedral of Christ Church, Oxford, as the present plan does not propose to affect that Chapter, except as to Residence, and the annexation of two of the Stalls to the Livings which the Chapter possesses in that city.

\* It has been suggested to me that it is extremely desirable to avoid the retention of any titles which are not scriptural, and in order to give suitable distinction to the highest rank in the visible Church, the Cathedrals should be placed under the personal charge of the Bishop, assisted by a certain number of "*Ministers.*"

The Service, too, of the Cathedral being thus placed more exclusively under the controul and subject to the responsibility of one constantly resident person, may become more parochial, and therefore more devotional and spiritual in its nature. Nothing can be less satisfactory to those who desire to worship God in spirit and in truth, than the coldness and formality of Cathedral service. The poor are effectually excluded by the arrangements of the very small portion of the vast edifice which is applied to the real business of worship. And though it is unnecessary to enlarge upon other objections, some of which arise from circumstances that are hardly remediable, yet there are many things which a devout and earnest person, permanently residing, and armed with due power, might alter materially, to the promotion of true religion.\*

The Service of the Cathedral being thus adequately provided for, it will be asked, whether it is proposed entirely to abolish Prebendaries?—This, it is known, was ardently desired by Cran-

\* One of the most desirable of these reforms would be in the present system of Church Music: in taking away such reliques of Popery as chanting, and all anthems, solos, duets, voluntaries, &c. and endeavouring to make our psalmody simple, easy, and, above all, *universal and congregational*, a practice to be adopted and encouraged wherever, in the beautiful language of Mr. Montgomery, “there is a Church on earth training up Candidates for the Church in Heaven.”

mer, who called them “ an Estate which St. Paul, reckoning up the degrees and estates allowed in his time, could not find in the Church of Christ.” But our plan does not propose to extend as far as the wish of the illustrious Reformer. As supernumeraries indeed in a Church already provided with ministers, or as sinecurists in a city where they have no efficient duties to perform, they should be abolished. But it will be found, on examining our Cathedral towns, that in most of them there are Benefices in the gift of the Chapter, where the population is extensive, and the emoluments extremely small, the duties of which are now assigned to Minor Canons or other subordinate persons. These Livings, if the population exceeds 1500 souls, should be inseparably annexed to a Stall of the Chapter; if below that amount they might be conferred upon the Chaplains, whose stipends should be proportionably increased. In those cities where the Chapter happens to have no patronage of this sort, in case there are Benefices which come within this description, arrangements might easily be made with the Patrons for annexing them to Prebends. But this system of Endowment should be strictly confined to the Livings *within the city*. For, however small the distance, the great object for which residence should be so strictly enforced, would be missed, if a Living, though only a few miles distant, were annexed to

a Prebend: the incumbent would be passing his days in his prebendal residence in the city, and only visiting his flock for Sunday duties.

In Chapters, where this mode of annexation of Livings could not be adopted, there should be no stalls continued. And in such cases, as well as in all those in which the Chapter has been materially diminished in number, the patronage of its Livings might, without any great violation of principle, and with much general benefit, be transferred to the Bishop in whose Diocese such Livings are situated.

The plan proposes, 1st, To apply somewhat above £50,000 per annum to the stipends of the Deans and their Chaplains. 2dly, The sum of £100,000 per annum towards the endowment of such Chapter Benefices or other similarly situated city parishes; and 3dly, The residue, which, according to the estimate already alluded to, will amount to about the annual sum of £150,000 towards the augmentation of Country Livings, the building of Residences, and the building and endowment of new Churches and Chapels in poor and populous districts.

It must necessarily happen that considerable objections will be made to a plan so large and comprehensive as that which is here submitted for consideration. It is needless to notice further than has already been done, that class of objections which are constantly applied to every al-

teration merely because it *is* an alteration; and which, therefore, can only be answered by an appeal to the extent and nature of the evils to be remedied, and of the benefits to be effected. But there are two objections which deserve a more peculiar attention.

1st, It is said that it is dangerous to change the hands in which property is vested, and that the meddling with one species of it, gives the example of interfering with all property. To this, it may in the first place be answered, that there is no sort of analogy between corporation or public property and private inheritances; and though it should be conceded, that the transfer were to a certain extent objectionable, yet, as it would be almost impossible to effect the object by leaving the property in its present hands, partly from the extent and nature of the fund itself, and partly from the constitution of the corporations in whom it would be vested, it may fairly be asserted that so distant and speculative a danger, is not of sufficient weight to counterbalance all the evils and corruptions which have been pointed out as at present existing.

The 2d objection is, That placing so large a Fund in the hands of one Corporation may hereafter tempt the cupidity of a needy and unprincipled administration to seize the whole for the exigencies of the state. This argument, at



first, carries with it a formidable sound, but the more closely it is examined the less terror will it inspire:—It supposes one of two conjunctures. 1. Either that so total a spirit of atheism and irreligion will exist in the nation as that, like revolutionary France, it will abolish the service of God, and declare that no clergy shall be supported at all. To this it may be answered, that if ever so atrocious a spirit shall have become widely prevalent in the country, it would confiscate the emoluments now scattered in all the various corporations of the Church, with the same ease that it would despoil one corporation. Or, 2dly, That such an administration, though professing and intending to support the Clergy of the Establishment, would, nevertheless, seize and sell the lands, and make them stipendiaries dependent on the supplies annually voted by the House of Commons. But, in the first place, if the premises already stated be correct, the Administration would hardly be a gainer by the crime, unless it intended to provide such inconsiderable revenues as almost to extinguish religion. In the next place, the facilities for executing such a project would be very small. The fund being in land, the alienation of it would be something very different from the simple process of wiping away a given portion of a national debt. The forms and the delay of a sale must be gone through, nor would purchasers be readily found to become accomplices in this



sacrilegious spoliation, who must be conscious, how easily a succeeding Parliament would undo, what its predecessor had decreed. Nor is it extremely probable, that whatever might be the dishonesty of such an administration, it would be so blind to its own interests as thus to violate all the best feelings of our nature, and alienate from it every wise, and good, and religious man in the country.

It must be further observed in recommendation of the Plan, that the revenues of the Church would be materially augmented by it.\* The estates, as is well known, are principally let upon leases for lives or for years, renewable on the payment of fines. The lessors are at best only tenants for life, and often considerably advanced in years, and in many of the less lucrative stations, their tenure is of a still more transitory nature, as it combines both the chances of life and the chances of promotion. The consequence has been, that the Church, in many cases, receives much less for renewals, than what, upon a fair calculation, she is entitled to. This will be remedied by the appointment of a Board of a fixed and permanent

\* This consideration may remove any objections that may be raised on the ground of the *expense* likely to be created by the machinery of the Commission. And when it is recollected that the cost of the three Boards for which it is substituted will be saved to the public, the objection of expense sinks into one immeasurably small, especially when considered with reference to the collection and application of a revenue estimated at £500,000 per annum.

nature. Not that the leases of Church property can with justice be suffered to run out, though its income would thereby be immensely increased. For as the practice of renewal, within certain limits, has obtained for so great a length of time ; as so much property has been bought and sold, and so many family arrangements by wills or settlement made upon the faith of it ; the most ardent friend of the Church could scarcely require an end to be put to this species of property. But it would be easy to arrange such an equitable scale, upon sound principles, as would greatly improve the patrimony of the Church, without effecting any injustice to those who have for centuries been its tenants. This would effectually check those unjustifiable attempts that are frequently made by lessees, to wring from the necessities or the cupidity of aged lessors, the acceptance of a less sum for a renewal, than the Church is fairly entitled to. It would put a stop to many unpleasant and sometimes discreditable negotiations and squabbles, and by taking the care of these concerns out of the hands of persons who would then be otherwise provided for, it would remove from the Church one ground for suspicion of avarice and secularity.

The arguments for another part of the Plan may be comprised in fewer words, as it relates to evils about which there is no difference of opinion.

All are agreed upon the expediency of removing them, and there appears to be but little real difficulty in the task. The most urgent of these measures is to put an immediate end, if not to the system of *Translations*,\* at least to the frequency of *Translations* for mere worldly purposes: “the only real scandal,” as is observed by a judicious writer already quoted, “that at present attaches to the Hierarchy.” The first step to this is an Equalization of the Bishoprics, which will be found to be provided for in the 27th Sect. of the following Plan. The same provision will put an end to the practice of *Commendams*; and when these two measures shall have been effected, the principal grounds of complaint against the Order will have been removed.

The Plan further proposes the erection of two new Sees, the Bishops of which should not be in Parliament. Several of the Dioceses are, as is

\* It is singular how early this corruption crept into the Church. Milner relates that at the Council of Sardica, A.D. 347, several Canons were made severely condemning this “pernicious system.” The language both of the Canon and of the pious Historian is too strong for these days. Vol. ii. 82. There is, however, still earlier authority, as both by the first Council of Nice in 325 and the Council of Antioch in 341 translations were expressly forbidden. A Bill to prevent Translations was brought into the House of Commons in 1701, and was read twice, but was lost in the Committee by the artifices of an adversary who contrived to insert a clause respecting the election of mayors in towns and other civil officers.

well known, most inconveniently large.\* Milner in writing of the 3d century, observes that Dioceses were then much smaller than in after times, that the vast extension of them proved very inconvenient to the cause of godliness, and that Cranmer wished to correct this evil in our national Church. “But *that*,” he adds, “and many other good things slept with the English Reformers.”

The great Diocese of Lincoln comprises the entire counties of Lincoln, Leicester, Huntingdon, Bedford and Buckingham, and part of Hertfordshire.

The Diocese of Chester includes the entire counties of Chester and Lancaster, and part of Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Yorkshire.

\* If Cranmer objected to our English Dioceses, what would he have said of our East Indian Church, and of that fatal and ill-judged *economy* which has thrown the enormous labours of a Diocese containing so many thousands of miles, in an exhausting and enfeebling climate, upon the unassisted strength of one Bishop? Nothing is more sad than to read the earnest and, one should have thought, irresistible appeals of such men as Buchanan, Middleton, and Heber; to see with what difficulty even the present scanty stipends of that Church were wrung from the reluctant hands that pay them; and lastly, to think that some of the very best men that ever left the shores of England have literally been sacrificed as martyrs to this parsimony. Report states that the good and faithful servant who has recently taken up this cross, is to have for his Diocese what Cranmer terms “the comfort of suffragans.” But even this is inadequate to the vast demands of this *whitening* harvest. We owe India a mighty debt, for many reasons which must occur to all of us, and it is obvious that the finger of God points out this nation as the appointed means for the great work of evangelizing the East.

The Diocese of York comprehends three fourths of Yorkshire, all Nottinghamshire, and Hexham in the county of Northumberland.

That of Lichfield and Coventry contains all Staffordshire and Derbyshire, except two parishes, the largest part of Warwickshire, and nearly one half of Shropshire.

The northern parts of the Diocese of Chester the Plan proposes to annex to Carlisle, which is at present of inconsiderable extent: to take the southern part of the Diocese of Lincoln, and to fix the seat of the See at Windsor; and, lastly, to take the Counties of Nottingham and Derby from the Sees of York and Lichfield and Coventry, and to fix the seat of the See at Southwell.\*

In fixing the amount of the Stipends of the Prelates, the country should, in the words of Jeremy Taylor, secure to the Church “ a government apostolical, with dignities neither splendid nor sordid, too great for contempt and too little for envy, unless she meet with little people and

\* To these suggestions for diminishing the dioceses might be added the restoring or erecting: the Bishoprick of Ipswich to contain all Suffolk, Barnstaple to contain Cornwall, Newcastle to comprise Northumberland. The reader may also consult with great advantage a small work entitled *A Model of Non-Secular Episcopacy*, by the Rev. Thomas Sims, A. M., containing a plan, most ably and elaborately drawn, to make the number of the bishops bear some proportion to the vast increase of population.

greatly malicious.” The minimum of income for a Bishop, being a Peer of Parliament, should be £5,000 a year. Those who consider this sum too large, should be reminded of the heavy demands for just and necessary representation, for residence in the metropolis at the most expensive period of the year, for hospitality, and most of all, for charities, which, whether local or general, whether for ecclesiastical or for civil purposes, have ever received the most cordial, generous, and unceasing support, from our “ noble Hierarchy.” Those, who may think the sum too small, should remember, that, the Plan relieves the Prelates from that most oppressive and inconvenient of all taxes, the First Fruits; from Tenths, from the expenses of their Visitations, and from keeping their Residences in repair.

The next part of the Plan which concerns the Prelates is one which may perhaps not meet with such entire approbation. It is to apply the Law as to Residence with the same strictness and impartiality to them, as to the Lower Orders of the Clergy. To this it will be objected, that the necessary demands for their attendance in Parliament ought to make an exception in their favour. But in answer to this it must be urged, that as long as the present system of Proxies continues, such arrangements may be made during the three permitted months of non-residence, as



may secure the means of voting upon every debate to every individual Prelate. And if this should be found too little, some special provision might be made in favour of the Spiritual Peers, by which the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London should be entitled to hold a greater number of proxies, than any other Peer of Parliament is now enabled to hold.\* Lastly, it has been suggested that, in order at once to avoid the evil of detaining the Prelates too long from their dioceses, and at the same time to satisfy the religious scruples of those who disapprove of their interference in politics, a compact should be entered into that no measure affecting the Church should be brought forward in the House of Lords except during three specified months in the year, and that the Prelates should abstain from attending any debate, or from voting upon any question, even during that period, which did not relate to ecclesiastical matters.

The Residence in his diocese is the first duty of every Bishop: and, however shining and specious any offices may be, or however interesting any

\* Another evil practice might also by some better arrangement be amended. In consequence of the House of Peers considering it for its dignity that prayers should daily be read by a Bishop, one of the junior Prelates is kept from a distant and perhaps a hitherto neglected diocese for many weeks, and often months, when the most urgent and important duties are left undone, for no other purpose whatever than that of reading prayers to two or three Peers once a day.



labours may be, which take him away from this silent and unostentatious path of duty, they cannot compensate for the inconvenience and bad example of any considerable relinquishment of it.\*

The Plan also proposes a competent provision for the retirement of persons holding the more laborious offices in the Church, when age or infirmities shall have prevented their filling them with efficiency. Whether this object be provided for in the simple and more obvious manner there proposed,† or by what is sanctioned by the example both of antiquity and of foreign churches, the appointment of *Coadjutors*, is not very material. The principle of justice and of duty is the same:—those who have devoted the best years of their life to the service of the state, should have their latter days made easy at the expense of the state: and even if this obligation did not exist, it

\* This appears also to have been an evil which early attracted the attention of the Church. At the council of Sardica, already referred to, several canons were made, enjoining the residence of Bishops and forbidding their journies to Court. (Miln. 2. 82.) And it appears from another passage of this writer that the period of absence to be allowed, was not to be longer than three weeks. (vol. 3. 195.) Justinian also made some strict laws on the subject. Milner's observations on them are too strong, but written in a pious and earnest spirit. (vol. 3. 18.)

† The granting of a Retiring Pension has also the sanction of the example of the Primitive Church. An annual pension was allowed where a Bishop retired with the approbation of a council. —*Bingh, Ant.* l. vi. c. 4, s. 3.

is the most narrow and short-sighted policy, to hold forth to men the temptation to continue in difficult and laborious stations, beyond the period when they have ceased to be equal to the due performance of their duties.

Another important part of the Plan, is the proposition for effecting the removal of the Prelates from Parliament, without alarming those who tremble at any considerable departure from ancient usages; and for providing at the same time for the Church such a degree of influence in the National Councils, as will be requisite for its safety. If this can be satisfactorily effected, it will probably do more towards spiritualizing the Church, and advancing the interests of true religion, than any measure which has been adopted since the days of the Reformation.

It would seem a great presumption, after the Parliamentary Peerage of the Prelates has been exercised for so many centuries, and after it has been considered or affirmed as lawful by such men as Hooker, and Gibson, and Warburton, to express any doubt as to its legality, *under the letter and spirit of the Christian dispensation*. It may, however, be most respectfully and most humbly submitted, by one who brings no other learning to the subject than a diligent perusal of the New Testament, whether the illustrious persons who have treated upon this subject

have examined it so fully upon mere Christian and Evangelical principles, as the religious feelings of the common run of mankind have a right to expect. It has been ably argued on legal and constitutional grounds. It has been defended or eulogized as matter of “ornament,” or of “high antiquity,” or as “consonant to right reason,” or “as essential to an alliance between Church and State,” or “upon the example of such Jewish precedents as Eli and Esdras.” But it would have been more satisfactory, if the intention of the Divine Founder of the Church had been examined with reference to this specific question; and particularly as contained in His declarations, that His kingdom was not of this world; and in His refusal to give sentence in a criminal cause of adultery, and in a civil one of dividing an inheritance. There is so much proneness in mankind to put softening comments on the strict letter of the Bible, and to persuade themselves that its more self-denying injunctions were addressed exclusively to the first promulgators of Christianity, and not intended as matter of perpetual obligation; that it is to be regretted, that it had not been shown that these doctrines were not of the essence of universal Christianity, and that they were not as much binding on the present Ministers of the Gospel as on the Apostles. For if they be of such extensive import as to be obligatory on the “descending ages” of the Church, what

can be more clearly and emphatically a “ Kingdom of this World,” than the sitting in the supreme legislature and judicature of the realm; the possessing the power of making and repealing laws; of approving of peace or war; of imposing taxes; of deciding, without appeal, in litigations concerning temporal inheritances; and the assertion (though unaccompanied with the exercise), of the right of voting in cases of blood. Even Warburton shows by the following observation how incompatible the spiritual character of a Minister of Christ is with the office of a Temporal Judge: —“ The great Founder of our Religion said, ‘ Who made me a judge or divider between you?’ And what He would not assume to Himself, He would hardly bestow upon His Ministers.”\*

Again, the authority of St. Paul is considered by many as utterly prohibiting a shepherd and overseer of Christ’s flock from mixing in secular conflicts and political struggles. “ No man that warreth,” says the single-hearted Apostle, “ entangleth himself with the affairs of this life.” And in exhorting his disciple to withdraw himself as much as possible from the affairs of the world, that his thoughts and energies might be more entirely devoted to his Evangelical work, he urges him, in another place, to “ meditate upon these things, to give himself *wholly* to them.”

\* Alliance, &c. Book 2.

Who can maintain that Parliamentary duties are not a very great impediment to the faithful and spiritual performance of the Pastoral function? The necessary correspondence and intercourse of a Bishop with his Clergy, the labours of Visitations, of Confirmations, of Preaching, and the due preparation for those offices, are fully sufficient to engross all the time and all the powers, and all the affections of the most zealous and self-devoted minister. How will he sufficiently “ meditate upon these things;” how does he “ give himself *wholly* to them,” if it is part of his duty to pass several months in every year in the turmoil of the capital, and amidst the bustle of political agitation?

But even if the Parliamentary Peerage of the Prelates be not in terms a violation of the letter of the New Testament, it may be submitted that it would have been a “ more excellent way” to have followed the example of the Apostles; who, content with such things as were provided for them, sought neither personal aggrandizement nor civil power, but submitting themselves in all things to the Supreme Magistrate, relied on the piety and affection of their followers for worldly support.

But leaving the high ground of Religious Obligation, let us consider how far the interests of Christianity are, in fact, promoted by the Prelates having seats in the House of Peers.

First: their force, even when united, which is not often the case, is numerically small. It would never be able to resist a very prevalent feeling in the great majority of the assembly. Nor would it produce a more considerable effect, even where numbers were more nearly balanced, in those cases where a strong opinion of the nation at large, had been reiterated in the voice of numerous majorities of the House of Commons.

In the next place, no one can have attended a debate in that assembly, when the passions of the combatants have been excited by that intense degree of party virulence and animosity, which prevails when measures of more than ordinary interest are discussed, without feeling that it is an arena where the Ministers of a religion of love and good-will to man, can scarcely with propriety be spectators. But if, as is sometimes the case, and most fatally for the interests of Christianity, they descend from the tone of plain and simple exposition of their sentiments, and become themselves the gladiators in the strife of bitterness and personality, a hateful spectacle of some of the worst passions of our nature is presented, and a scandal is given in the most conspicuous assembly in the realm.

And as nothing has a more certain effect in secularizing the Church, than the introduction of Politics into it, so nothing has a greater tendency to lower it in the estimation of the people. One



reason why our Judges are so justly popular, is their very general separation from all party violence and political litigation. The admixture of the Ministers of Religion in politics, is bad every way. If, as is the natural inclination of religious men, of men looking beyond this present scene, and caring for nothing while they continue in it, but the maintenance of good government and order; they keep aloof from the transitory squabbles of party, and support the Administration of the day, they incur the charge of servility, and perhaps of tergiversation. If, on the other hand, they embark in a systematic course of opposition, they seem to be violating those commands which inculcate submission to the powers that be, and which declare resistance to such powers, to be resistance to the ordinance of God. If they find it their duty to withstand the loud and earnest desires of the great mass of the people, they are pursued by a "hunt of obloquy," which is of infinite evil, in all respects, and which turns into persecutors and revilers, those, who ought to "esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake."

If, therefore, the Parliamentary Peerage of the Prelates be prejudicial to the cause of Religion, the next inquiry will be, whether a sufficient substitute for it can be provided by an Ecclesiastical Synod or Church Assembly. And, as approving our endeavours for this purpose, we have the great authority of Hooker, who recommends

that the abuses, which had taken place in such assemblies, “ should rather cause men to study how so gracious a thing may again be reduced to that first perfection.” “ A thing,” he observes, “ whereof God’s own blessed Spirit was the Author, a thing practised by the Holy Apostles themselves, a thing never otherwise than most highly esteemed of, till pride, ambition, and tyranny began by factions and vile endeavours to abuse that divine invention, unto the furtherance of wicked purposes.”\*

And, to the same effect, it is observed by Warburton “ to be a great error to imagine such assemblies, when legally convened, to be either useless or mischievous. For all societies being administered by human means, it must needs happen that religious societies, as well as civil, will have frequent occasion to be new regulated and put in order. Now, though by the alliance between Church and State, no new regulations can be made for Church Government but by the state’s authority; yet still there is reason that the Church should be previously consulted, which we must suppose well skilled (as in her proper business) to form and digest such new regulations, before they come before the consideration of the Civil Legislature.”

And in another place he observes, “ As for the mischief arising from Synodical Assemblies by

\* Ecc. Pol. Book i. sec. 10.

their heats, quarrels and divisions, it is owned they are great, so as to have occasioned the civil magistrate to suspend them for a long time together. But then we must consider that these quarrels have all arisen from not having had their original and ending, under an Establishment, precisely determined, as appears from the constant subject of their quarrels, which have always been about the power and extent of their privileges and jurisdiction. And, we may venture to affirm, that synods convened and meeting on the principles here laid down, cannot possibly be pernicious to the State or fruitless to the Church.”\*

But even supposing that the Advocates for the Parliamentary Peerage of the Prelates could show that the Convocation, however modelled, would not compensate, in direct influence, to the Church, for the loss of so many votes in the House of Lords; yet it would still be easy to prove, that so far from being weaker, she would be much the stronger, by the severing of this unnatural Alliance between the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of the World.

The real influence of the Church in the counsels of the nation, and the security of her endowments, do not depend on the votes or the speeches of a small number of Representatives or “Guardians” in Parliament; but on the habits and affec-

\* Alliance, &c. Book 2.

tions of the people, strengthened and confirmed by her own growing desire to work out her purity and efficiency, and by her faithfulness in the discharge of the great trust which is committed to her hands. These are the arms by which, under the protection of God, she will repel the attacks of all enemies, and secure the support not only of every religious, but of every peaceful, sober, moral, and temperate man in the kingdom. With these she may rely with confidence on Parliament, and permit her Hierarchy, unpolluted by Politics, to apply its undivided energies to that sacred object to which it should be exclusively devoted.

There is one remaining point, which, though not made the subject of any specific proposal in the following Plan, is yet so deeply connected with the purity of the Church, that it would be improper to omit all notice of it, though the time is not yet arrived when we can hope for any Legislative Enactment respecting it. It relates to the mode of disposing of the Crown Patronage. The corruption of the present system has been most forcibly pointed out by two very able writers in some recent periodical works. The one is in a letter to the Lord Chancellor, contained in Blackwood's Magazine for February, 1832; the other in an Article on Church Reform, in the British Critic or Quarterly Theological

Review for January, 1832. Both these publications, as is well known, are conducted on the soundest principles both of loyalty and of attachment to the Church, and the latter of them is understood to represent the opinions of a very large and influential body of the Clergy. Neither of them can be accused of being actuated by any rash or vehement spirit of innovation. They both, however, speak with indignant but well-deserved reprobation of the mode in which the Crown Patronage has been usually disposed of, and justly consider it as a great scandal and corruption, which it is highly expedient to remove.

The former, after dwelling at some length upon these evils, very truly observes, “ while the case continues to be so, nothing effectual can be done for the better government of the Church. As long as its high places are filled by those, whose promotion has been the result of Ministerial favouritism or Parliamentary intrigue, so long will its affairs be administered with a view to temporal rather than spiritual interests.”

In the same spirit, the latter of these writers asks “ what probability is there in the nature of things, or from the results of experience, that the Crown will generally and wisely consult the real interests of Religion? Looking to the almost universal practice of mankind, we see that patronage of every description is used more as an instrument of power or of gratification, than

under any overruling sense of duty. And regarding the manner in which Church Patronage has been exercised from the Revolution to the present day, what hope can we entertain of seeing it made effectual for the promotion of Religion?"

In other professions, the selection of persons to whom great and important trusts are delegated, is usually made with due attention to their merits and their capacity; and those who have to decide upon their claims have commonly a deep interest in providing the fittest persons, or have at least a minute acquaintance with the details of the subject matter. But the appointment to the highest offices in the Church is widely different. These, as is well known, are in the nomination of the Prime Minister, a person who is necessarily intensely occupied with worldly pursuits, distracted by an immense multiplicity of urgent and important concerns, and liable to be agitated by the passions and the prejudices, which party and politics engender. He is deeply interested to promote the benefit of a few; he has to reward the services, to stimulate the exertions, and to keep alive the hopes of his adherents; and he is oppressed on every vacancy with the importunate demands of the powerful and influential, urging upon him the claims of kinsmen and dependants. A person so situated, and surrounded by such temptations (whatever



may be his individual excellence,) is not likely to come to a right exercise, of this most momentous of all trusts. He has too great a temptation to overlook the interests of religion, in the pretensions of his party or his kindred. Nothing sets this in a more striking light than the credit which Lord Liverpool obtained for a few disinterested appointments, in which, disregarding the claims of the powerful, he elevated unpretending merit and excellence to high places in the Church. This conduct was, no doubt, highly laudable in the individual Minister; but the mere fact of its having attracted any attention, is sufficient evidence of the corruption of the system.

In truth, according to the strong and appropriate language which has been already quoted, all parties have joined in considering Church Patronage as so much oil for greasing the wheels of Government. A proposed coalition between two powerful parties in the state, was once supposed to have failed, merely because they could not agree who should have the disposal of the Church Patronage. Not that the negociators either supposed or alleged that either party would bring improper servants into the sanctuary. The cause of Religion was indeed not at all under consideration. But the conflicting interests happened to be so nicely balanced, that the possession of that great state engine of parliamentary

and political influence would, it was thought, secure an undue preponderance to the one party or to the other.

The remedy for this evil, proposed by the former of these writers, and scarcely disapproved of by the latter, is the appointment of a Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs, and the vesting the Crown Patronage in Ten unpaid Commissioners, Members of the Church of England, and chosen for their known devotion to it. The writer refers, as a precedent, to the expedient adopted by William III. That monarch felt that, as a stranger, he was not qualified to make a proper use of his power of appointing to offices in the Church, and yet was unwilling to commit the care of it to his Ministers. He, accordingly, having left the patronage entirely in the hands of the Queen during her life, who was guided in her exercise of it by the advice of Tillotson; upon her death, as we are informed by the biographer of Burnet, granted a Commission to the two Archbishops and four other prelates, whereby they or any three of them were empowered to recommend to all vacant preferment in the Church, signifying the same to his Majesty under their hands: and during the King's absence beyond sea they were empowered of their own authority to present to all Crown livings under the value of 140*l.* per annum. This Commission was renewed in the year 1700, and several of the most eminent prelates that have

adorned the Church of England were the fruits of it.

It is not, however, to be denied, that there are some weighty objections to the plan. It is an evil inseparable from all Boards of Commissioners, that from the responsibility being so much divided, the check of public opinion has less influence upon them than upon insulated individuals; as the praise of disinterested measures, or the discredit of corrupt ones, is to be shared amongst so many: and it is the fashion to accuse them of a proneness to jobbing.

As long, however, as human nature continues what it is, Patronage must be confided to frail and fallible, and sometimes to corrupt hands. It is, therefore, at least one great recommendation of the proposal, that it secures the total exclusion of the greatest of all the causes of corruption—the *Influence of Politics*, that fertile source of jobbing, ambition, secularity, and scandal. It is hardly to be supposed, that any very improper appointment will emanate from a Board, constituted of five such Ecclesiastics as the Archbishops, and the Bishops of London, Durham, and Winchester, associated with five Laymen, chosen for their high moral worth, for the candour and impartiality of their sentiments, and for their tried attachment to the Church. If the very highest degrees of excellence should sometimes be neglected, in those rare cases where an exalted standard of faith and

practice may attach to its possessor the ungrounded suspicion of fanaticism; yet, upon the whole, the appointments will be good, and, at all events, there will be none scandalous, under the control of an observant Public, a vigilant Parliament, and a free Press. And, as is acutely observed by the same writer, supposing the Commissioners to be actuated by the lowest motives, namely, the desire of appointing some relative or friend, these motives could only operate with *one-tenth* of the force which would belong to them, if the nomination rested, as at present, with a single individual.

We have thus gone through the more prominent objects which call for Reformation in the Temporalities of the Church. The subject of *Commutation of Tithes* cannot, with propriety, be designated a measure of Church Reform, being an equitable adjustment of a most lawful, but, to the feelings of many, an irritating and vexatious demand. But even, had the author considered it as coming within the scope of the present publication, he would have found himself, in a great measure, anticipated by the arguments already addressed to the public in support of a commutation for a *Corn Rent*, and more particularly in the plan suggested by the Rev. J. Miller, in a letter to Earl Grey, which, though somewhat objectionable in point of machinery, appears to be perfectly equitable in prin-

ciple, and, if adopted, would probably do much to put an end to all the unjust and uncharitable feelings which this unfortunate subject excites.

The Alterations here proposed are, it is submitted, neither violent, nor uncalled for, nor contrary to the spirit of those Institutions which they profess to affect. They will no otherwise change our ancient and venerable Establishment “than,” to use the apt illustration of Hooker, “a path is changed by altering only the uppermost face thereof; which, be it laid with gravel, or set with grass, or paved with stones, remaineth still the same path.” If we first take due caution “that against Scripture nothing be admitted into the Church,” it is our next duty to provide “lest that part which ought always to be kept even, do come to be overgrown with brambles and thorns.”\* ^

In conclusion, let us refer to the standard which we originally set up for our guide, that only “lantern to our feet, and light unto our paths.” If any one thinks, and can show, that the Non-Residence of the Clergy; the holding of Pluralities and Commendams; the permitting such numbers of parishes in the country, and such masses of population in towns, to be without Resident Ministers or the means of grace, while such ample revenues are at the same time bestowed on Sinecures; that the Translation of the

\* Ecc. Pol. book iii. s. 3.

Prelates, and their admixture with Politics; and, finally, that the abuse of Government Patronage to obtain Parliamentary Influence; are consistent with the will of the Great Founder of the Church; such a person may honestly and conscientiously, if not safely, neglect, or resist the approaching demand for Church Reform. But, if that Will contains a condemnation of these evils, and pronounces them to be Corruptions, there is an end for ever to the question, whether they should be retained, or whether they should be abolished. The sentence is passed against them, the accursed thing must be put away; one plain line of conduct is pointed out—"This is the way, walk ye in it." To be led by *fear* to elude or to delay the performance of so clear a duty, is to violate the grand principle of Christian obligation, which forbids us to do evil, that good may come.

*Fear* is indeed felt by many that the Church of England is in danger; *fear* that the spirit of Innovation and of Change, the spirit of Insubordination, the contempt of Ancient Institutions, the machinations of powerful enemies, and the lukewarmness of weak friends are bringing down ruin upon her. But these dangers will be viewed by the eye of Wisdom and of Piety as warnings of approaching chastisements, which a timely repentance and salutary reformation may avert. It is true that many fair and flourishing Churches



have been removed and their light has been quenched; and the same desolating judgments may, perhaps, be awaiting our own. But He who walks in the midst of them, as He has used these and similar instruments in wrath for *their* downfall, so may He in mercy use them for *our* trial and sanctification. Only let us turn and be humbled in time: let us not place our trust in any arm of flesh; but crying to the Strong for strength, apply in His own appointed way for that help, which never will be refused to those who seek for it in simplicity and in truth. Let the influence of all who possess influence, and the zeal and the holiness and the talents of all who are endowed with those graces and gifts, be united to render her in constitution, in temporalities, in government, and in practice, what she has long been in profession, in doctrine and in faith, an APOSTOLICAL CHURCH. Having thus acted, we may fix our hopes in a dutiful and calm reliance on the Divine promises of support; not in indolence and security, but exerting all lawful and all righteous means, in the strenuous defence of our renovated Establishment.

May HE, who is all love and goodness and wisdom, who has purchased unto Himself an Universal Church by the precious blood of His dear Son, send down His heavenly benediction upon our Church! May He assist the endeavours of those who seek, by the aid of His Holy Spirit, to

purify her from the Corruptions which, doubtless for the wise and salutary purpose of humbling and of proving us, have been permitted to arise in her, and to defile her! May He pour the graces of the same Spirit upon his Servants, her Ministers, purging them from avarice, ambition, sloth, and worldly-mindedness;—making them a chosen generation, a holy nation, a peculiar people;—a priesthood wholly devoted to his service, crucified to the world, and the world crucified to them:

————— Ministers  
 Detached from pleasure, to the love of gain  
 Superior, insusceptible of pride,  
 And by ambitious longings undisturbed!

May our beloved Church evince that surest proof of the influence of genuine Religion, a gradual progression in true holiness; a passing on from grace to grace, from purity to purity, and, therefore, from strength to strength! May her last works, like those of the Church of Thyatira, be more abundant and more excellent than her first; that so, under the blessing of God, she may, if possible, be presented unto HIM, through Jesus Christ, “a glorious Church,” without blemish, and without spot!





## THE PLAN.





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# PLAN OF CHURCH REFORM.

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## I.

THAT no Ecclesiastical person whatever shall in any manner be affected by this Act in respect of any right or interest which he may have at the time of the passing of the Act, except by his own consent. Existing rights preserved.

## II.

That all the Estates, Rights, Powers, and Authorities, now vested in the three Offices of Queen Anne's Bounty, the First Fruits Office, and the Tenths and Augmentation Office, be transferred to and vested in a Corporation, to be called the *Commissioners for the Management of Ecclesiastical Property*; with Provision for Compensation to such of the Officers of the said three Offices as cannot be retained: and that all payments (except such as are hereby abolished) which have heretofore been receivable at such offices, be henceforth made to the proper officer of such Corporation. Corporation.

## III.

That the Corporation consist of the following *Official Members*, who shall not receive any salary—The two Archbishops, the Lord Chancellor, Official Members.

the First Lord of the Treasury, the Bishops of London, Durham, and Winchester, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the three Chief Justices, the Master of the Rolls, the Prolocutor of the Lower House of Convocation, the Deans of Westminster and St. Paul's, and the Archdeacon of London.

## IV.

Salaried Mem-  
bers.

That, besides such Official Members, there be appointed by the Crown certain other Commissioners, who shall be Laymen, and shall receive salaries, to be fixed by the Act. That at first there shall be *Three* such Commissioners, but with power in the Crown, as the Estates vest in the Corporation, to increase them to any number not exceeding *Eight*.

## V.

Duties of them.

That such paid Commissioners shall devote their time exclusively to the management and control of the Ecclesiastical Property, and to the application of its Revenues in manner pointed out by the Act; and in all questions which shall arise before the Corporation, they shall have the like right of voting and the same powers as the Official Commissioners.

## VI.

Accountant-  
General.

That there be an Accountant-General to the said Corporation, with such number of Clerks as

the Commissioners shall certify from time to time to be necessary, and all sums receivable under this Act shall be paid into the Bank of England to the credit of the Corporation, adopting as far as possible the practice of the Office of the Accountant-General of the Court of Chancery; and that all payments be made by the Accountant-General upon the order of the Commissioners.

## VII.

That a Commission be appointed to inquire Convocation into the best Means of giving Efficiency to the *Convocation*, and to devise a Mode whereby the Attendance of the Bishops in Parliament may be dispensed with, without Danger to the Rights, Liberties and Privileges of the Church of England.

## VIII.

That upon the death of any such Archbishop, Mode of vesting or Bishop, or on any other vacancy of his See, all the temporalities and property thereof shall vest in the Corporation, subject to the trusts of the Act.

## IX.

That when the existing Members of the Chapters, &c., mentioned in Sect. 29, shall cease to be such Members by death, or otherwise, the Corporation shall succeed from time to time to all the share and interest in such property which was possessed by every such Member or Mem- Same in Chapters.

bers; and when all the existing Members shall have so ceased to be Members of such Chapter, the whole of such property shall vest in the Corporation, subject to the trusts of the Act; but their successors, in such Chapters as hereby appointed, shall continue to be Ecclesiastical Corporations, and entitled to all rights, powers, and interests which the present Chapters are entitled to, except as otherwise provided by this Act.

## X.

Provision till  
property vested.

That until all the existing Members of any Chapter shall have ceased to be Members thereof, in all questions which shall arise in the Chapter, the Commissioners shall have votes equivalent in number to the amount of shares so vested in them.

## XI.

The like as to  
Renewals.

That when the Corporation shall, by the death or removal of Members, have obtained a preponderance in any Chapter, upon all applications for Leases or Renewals thereof, the surviving Members shall be entitled to have all such Leases granted or renewed upon the terms and with such fines as have theretofore been most usually taken by the practice of such Chapter: and in case there shall have been no precise usage in respect thereof, then according to a scale to be fixed by the Act.



## XII.

That when more than one Moiety of the existing Members of any Chapter shall have been removed by death or otherwise, the Corporations shall have power to contract with any or all of the remaining Members for the purchase of their interests, upon payment of an Annual Sum equal to the average value of such interests, which shall thereupon vest in the Corporation; but such annual payment shall cease in case the party shall obtain any other Preferment.

Power to buy  
out surviving  
Members.

## XIII.

That all Sinecures in the presentation of Bishops and Chapters be abolished, and that the property attached to them be vested in the Corporation; but that the property of such as belonged to Bishops be specifically applied to the augmentation of Benefices in the presentation of the See.

Sinecures.

## XIV.

That the payment of First Fruits and Tenths be abolished as to all Ecclesiastical Persons whose Stipends are hereby provided, and as to all persons appointed to Benefices under £1000 per ann., and that the Corporation shall have power to discharge all other Livings therefrom, upon such terms and under such agreements with the Patrons thereof, as shall be provided by the Act.

First Fruits.

## XV.

Payments.

That the following Payments be made by the Corporation out of the Funds so vested in them: viz. the Stipends of the several Ecclesiastical Persons as fixed by the Act; the Salaries of the Commissioners and other Officers, and the Expenses of carrying the Act into Execution, as specially directed by it; the Repair of Cathedrals, and of those Churches, of which the property is hereby vested in the Corporation; the Expenses of Choirs and other charges attendant on Divine Service; and also the Repairs of the Palaces and Residences of such Ecclesiastical persons.

## XVI.

Surplus Revenue.

That after such payments, the Revenues be applied by the Corporation to the Augmentation of small Benefices and to the Endowment of Churches or Chapels in populous districts of England and Wales.

## XVII.

Power to borrow.

That in case the Revenues and other Funds be at first inadequate to the various payments fixed by the Act, the Corporation may borrow Money upon Bills in the nature of Exchequer Bills, bearing Interest.

## XVIII.

Powers to manage Estates.

That the Corporation shall have the usual powers of Sale and Exchange, and have more

extensive powers than Ecclesiastical persons now possess of granting Leases, or of contracting as to Planting, Inclosing, Building, working Mines, or other modes of improving Property: and that as to all such Property as hath heretofore been let on Leases for Lives or for a Term of Years renewable, a certain Scale for Terms of Renewal be fixed by the Act, according to which all Renewals shall thereafter take place.

## XIX.

That the Corporation return Annually to Parliament an Account of the Deaths or Removals of Persons whereby any Property shall become vested in them: and also the Particulars of all Sums which they have received in the preceding year, and of all Payments which they have made: and also of all Augmentations and Endowments.

Annual Return  
to Parliament.

## XX.

That no Ecclesiastical person, appointed subsequent to the Act, shall hold any other Preferment whatever, except 1st, that any Canon, Prebendary, or Chaplain, may hold some benefice within the city or town where the Chapter to which he belongs is situated, as hereby provided; and 2dly, that any Incumbent of a Parish, whereof the yearly value does not exceed £400, may hold another Benefice of smaller amount along with it.

Pluralities.

## XXI.

Residence.

That every Ecclesiastical Person be allowed to absent himself from his Diocese or Preferment for Three Calendar Months in each Year, and no more; and for non-residence shall be liable to a penalty of £            per day; but further absence may be granted to such person on the affidavit of two Medical Practitioners: in the case of a Bishop, by the King in Council, or of any other ecclesiastical person, by the Bishop.

## XXII.

Translation.

That no Translation shall ever be made of any Bishop appointed after this Act, being a Lord of Parliament, except to the Sees of Canterbury and York.

## XXIII.

Congé d'Elire.

That no *Congé d'Elire* be in future necessary, but that the appointment under the Sign Manual have the effect of vesting all Rights and Powers in the person appointed, without any payment or charge whatever.

## XXIV.

Visitation.

That every Bishop shall once in every year hold a Visitation in his Diocese, and that every Archdeacon shall, once in every year, visit every Parish in his Archdeaconry, and make an Annual Report of the state of the Churches, Chancels, and Residences, and of all other matters within his jurisdiction: and that the Expenses of such

Visitations be paid by the Corporation to Bishops and Archdeacons, according to a rate of        per mile for travelling expenses, and        per day for other disbursements.

## XXV.

That where any Archbishop, Bishop, or the Incumbent of any Benefice, having a population of 1,500 souls, shall become permanently incapacitated by Age or Infirmities from discharging the duties of his Office, or shall, after fifteen years' service therein, have attained the age of seventy years, such person shall be entitled, upon resigning such preferment, to receive a Pension equal to one half of the stipend thereof, provided such Pension shall not exceed £3,000 per annum, except the Archbishop of Canterbury, who shall be entitled to a retiring Pension of £4,000 per annum.

Retiring Pensions.

## XXVI.

That the following Sees be erected, the Bishops thereof not to be Lords of Parliament:—

New Dioceses.

1. The Southern Parts of the Diocese of Lincoln, viz. Bedfordshire, Bucks, and Part of Herts; and the Town of Windsor from the Diocese of Salisbury.—Seat of the See, Windsor.
2. The Counties of Derby and Nottingham to make one Diocese, which shall be in the Province of York.—Seat of the See, Southwell.

And that the Northern Parts of the Diocese of Chester, comprising Parts of Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Yorkshire, be added to the See of Carlisle.

## XXVII.

Stipends of  
Bishops.

That the following be the stipends of the Archbishops and Bishops within the Act:—

Archbishop of Canterbury . . . . .	£15,000
York . . . . .	12,000
Bishop of London . . . . .	10,000
Durham . . . . .	8,000
Winchester . . . . .	7,000
Twenty-one Bishops at £5000 . . . . .	105,000
Two Bishops, not being Lords of Parliament, at £3000	6,000
	<hr/>
	£163,000

## XXVIII.

Durham.

That provision as to the Temporal Rights, Jurisdictions, and Franchises of the See of Durham, be made by a separate Act of Parliament.

## XXIX.

Bishops may  
come in under  
the Act.

That as soon as the Corporation has funds at its disposal sufficient for that purpose, any Bishop who shall be willing to assign the Temporalities of his See to the Corporation, may thereupon receive the Stipend above provided by the Act, and become subject to its provisions as if he had been appointed subsequent thereto.

## XXX.

Deans, &c.

That in the following Chapters, or Collegiate Churches, the Dean or other Residentiary, and the Chaplains, shall have the following salaries:—

Canterbury . . .	}	1 Dean at £1800 . . . . .	£9,000
London . . .			
Westminster . . .		2 Chaplains at £200 . . . . .	£2,000
York . . .			
Durham . . .			
Bristol . . .	}	1 Dean or other Residentiary at	£22,800
Carlisle . . .			
Chester . . .			
Chichester . . .			
Ely . . .			
Exeter . . .		2 Chaplains at £200 . . . . .	£7,600
Gloucester . . .			
Hereford . . .			
Lincoln . . .			
Lichfield . . .			
Manchester . . .		1 Dean or other Residentiary at	£8,000
Norwich . . .			
Peterborough . . .			
Salisbury . . .			
Wells . . .			
Winchester . . .	}	2 Chaplains at £200 . . . . .	£3,200
Windsor . . .			
Wolverhampton . . .			
Worcester . . .			
Southwell . . .			
Ripon . . .	}	1 Dean or other Residentiary at	£8,000
Rochester . . .			
Llandaff . . .			
Bangor . . .			
Brecon . . .			
St. Asaph . . .	}	2 Chaplains at £200 . . . . .	£3,200
St. David's . . .			
Total . . .			£52,600

XXXI.

That the Corporation shall take an account of all the Livings in the gift of the several Chapters aforesaid, situated within the cities where such Chapters are, and of the population thereof: and where any such Livings have a population exceeding 1,500 souls, the Corporation shall have power to annex the same to one of the Stalls in

Prebendaries  
and Canons.



I should not be doing justice to a most ingenious, learned, and pious work, if I did not acknowledge the great obligations I have been under, particularly in the Letter here prefixed, to the very valuable volume of the Rev. John Riland, A.M. Curate of Yoxall, on *Church Reform*. It is written in a large and Catholic spirit, with great fervour and with great spirituality. His work on the *British Liturgy* I have received too recently to form a sufficient opinion upon. The Reader will also find much instruction and many valuable suggestions in *The Liturgy Revised*, by the Rev. Robert Cox, A.M. Perpetual Curate of Stonehouse.

I have omitted in this Edition the Observations on the District Visiting Societies, which I hope to enlarge, and make the subject of a separate publication.

# APPENDIX.

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## No. I.

THE following able View of the State of the respective Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland, is extracted from the *Record*, and is of such high merit as fully to deserve the notice of all serious readers.

“The truth that an evil course of conduct generally produces corresponding fruits to the evil worker—or, to soften the proposition, that the evils suffered to exist in a community sooner or later produce evils which are as whips and scorpions to the members of it—is receiving striking illustration at this moment, in the circumstances of the three Established Churches in these islands. Another truth is also receiving similar elucidation from their state, viz. the mysterious manner in which the fate of posterity is affected by the conduct of their ancestors. As we all know, if correct principles be sown in a land, many succeeding generations frequently gather the fruits of them; if principles of evil be sown, often, as from a noxious jungle, they spread over the face of nature, poisoning all that is healthy and useful to man.

“Of this latter truth the respective states of Scotland and Ireland at this day afford perhaps the most striking proof. In Scotland pure Protestantism was sown—speaking comparatively as it regards other nations—what a religious, moral, intelligent,

and respectable community adorns that rugged country! In Ireland Popery was sown—what an ignorant, lost, degraded people now present themselves to the world in the nineteenth century, as the undoubted and legitimate children of that Mother of Abominations! Both the countries we have named are *provinces* of the same empire. Incomparably more pains and toil have been used to govern Ireland aright than Scotland. Ireland is the Emerald Isle of richness and beauty. Scotland *was* a barren wilderness of mountain, and heath, and flood. Let correct religious and moral principles be infused through a nation, and, under any tolerable form of government, ‘the desert will rejoice and blossom as the rose:’ let corrupt religious and moral principles be their portion, and no form of government, however good, has power to raise them up to excellence or permanent prosperity.

“ But while the population of Ireland is now suffering in a manner the most poignant and vital, from the prevalence of Popery amongst them, the Irish Church, to which, in the Providence of God, was committed the task of rooting it out, and which, until lately, had done little or nothing towards the accomplishment of the mighty work, is now beginning to reap the appropriate fruits of its indolence and unfaithfulness. There has been happily introduced of late years into the Irish Church, a goodly number of faithful and energetic men of God. Very much at their instigation, and through their instrumentality, schemes, calculated to renew the face of Ireland, have been put into operation, and up to the present time have been prosecuted with the most hopeful success. But, whatever may be their final issue, ruin upon the Irish Church as an Establishment seems to be rapidly accumulating, heaped upon it by those who, if the Church in days past had done its duty, would in all probability have now been its own attached and intelligent children. The Irish Church, in days past, was not Popish, but it contained within it but a faint glimmering of that light which can dispel Papal and every other error; it had little of that heavenly strength and ardour, which, under the blessing of God,

can break asunder even Popish bars and shackles, and spread abroad the liberty, light, and life of the Gospel of Christ. The Irish Church, in short, lamentably and miserably failed of the end of its existence, and with that failure was connected the continuance in being of that dark, dismal, and destructive power, which, having recently acquired fresh strength, is rising up with every appearance of accomplishing its overthrow.

“ As the Church of England has by no means failed in the object of her existence to the extent of her associated sister of Ireland, so the dangers which threaten her are not so pressing—so the means she has at command for her defence are far more considerable.

“ The grand weakness of the English Church, however, arises substantially from the same source—viz. from having failed, during the long period of deadness and darkness from which she is now awakening, to instil her principles of truth into the minds of the population. Principles of scriptural and heavenly truth lay in her Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies; but they were not infused into the minds of her clergy, and consequently were not diffused by them through the mass of the population. This vital evil is now being daily remedied; but, however rapid the growth of divine truth in the minds of her sons, still taking the nation at large, viewing all ranks, from the highest to the lowest,—the ignorance of true religion which generally prevails, is truly appalling; the *liberality*, which is at present the fashionable substitute for it, is most destructive; destructive to all right principle, and, in its very essence, destructive to the existence of a national Establishment.

“ There is little doubt the most formidable *body* of enemies the English Church has now to cope with are the Dissenters: formidable from their union, their determined spirit, their wealth, and general respectability. But whence did they originate? Does the mind not revert to the unjust, cruel, and suicidal expulsion of 2,000 nonconformist clergymen from the pale of the Church in one day? It was the draining of its life-blood. It was the extraction and expulsion of the most precious leaven—which, had

it remained, might have continued to leaven the whole Church and the whole population. The bitter fruits of that most fatal deed, the Church of England may still be called upon to eat in bitterness of soul.

“ Much was wrong in the formation of the constitution of the Church of England—much which would not have existed had the life of Edward VI. been spared to his country. The errors to which we allude exist to the present day: they strike the eye; they offend the common sense of mankind; they consequently afford a mighty handle of offence to her enemies; and prove a source of the most sensible weakness to herself. The lordly wealth of a few (opposed to the lowliness and moderation of the Gospel); the consequent abject poverty of multitudes of the clergy, who must be hence at least tempted to desire a change; the numberless pluralities consequent upon the unnatural distribution of the property of the Church—one man feeding the flock and another eating the milk of it; the non-residence which abounds—and other evils, all easy to point out—all most difficult to eradicate, so firmly in a course of years do institutions wrap themselves together and become consolidated: but still, being evils, the circumstance of their being handed down to this generation, instead of created by it, does not change their character. There they are existing, seen and read of all men, and proving an unmanageable source of weakness and distress to the Church.

“ Our limits do not admit of our dwelling at length on the present condition and prospects of the Scottish Church, in illustration of the principle which we laid down at the commencement. These, however, no less strikingly demonstrate its accuracy and truth.

“ The Reformation in Scotland was carried forward in a spirit more severe and searching than in this country. The result is this, that if the principle of Establishments is to be admitted at all, there is little or nothing in the construction and working of the Scotch Church, which, to the eye of sense, stands out as an evil, or which admits of improvement. This of course is a

mighty advantage and a great safeguard. We may state, to avoid misconception, that the fact does not prove the superiority of the Presbyterian to the Episcopalian form of Church government: for Episcopacy in England, might, at the time of the Reformation, have been as completely cleared of the evils which now weaken her, as was Presbyterianism in Scotland. We simply state the fact as illustrative of the principle, that abuses and incongruities having been cast out at a remote period, the advantage of their expulsion is experienced at the present hour.

“The principle upon which it can be hoped successfully to attack the Church of Scotland rises out of the comparatively new ground broken by Dissenters on both sides of the Tweed, that national establishments, of whatever order, are unjust and inexpedient. But if the Scotch Church had been true to herself, the existence of a principle so unsound might have excited her wonder, but would have been the source of no apprehension to her. She would have stood fast, based on the affections of the entire population, as she is founded on the word of the living God. We cannot here enter on the false ground she assumed, which caused the venerable leaders of the Secession Church to leave her pale. We believe most spiritual and evangelical men in Scotland are desirous of *restoring* that, the want of which expelled these men from the Church. From an insignificant number, the descendants of these men have multiplied to mighty host. A goodly portion of the people, in persons and in affections, are thus separated from the mother Church; and their leaders, adopting principles with regard to establishments which their ancestors never knew, now join the English Dissenters in working for the overthrow even of their own Establishment. Hence the danger, if any exists, for the stability of the Church of Scotland.

“The moral is so distinct, that we need not draw it—our readers are not afraid of finding a moral even in a newspaper. Let us all be jealous with a godly jealousy, of admitting an evil, however minute, however speciously adorned or insidiously con-

cealed, into our hearts, our families, or our institutions, whether religious or civil. Being evil, it will assuredly work for evil; and though it may not appear for a time—and, in the case of public institutions, not for a generation, or even for several generations—it will at last, in all ordinary circumstances, rise up for the hurt and punishment, if not the ruin, of the persons and communities into which its poison has been infused."



## APPENDIX II.

The following valuable Observations on the Convocation are taken from the Record Newspaper:—

“The CONVOCATION appears to have been first convoked, in both Houses, in the reign of Edward I. in the year 1295. Its last sitting was in the year 1717, in the reign of George I. The object in view, in its original assembling, was to minister to the pecuniary necessities of the warlike Edward. It ceased to exist as an active and efficient body upon its discussions ceasing to comport with the Royal will and views, and its power of administering to the temporal necessities of the State being exhausted.

“The Convocation, from the paucity of its members, the number who took their seat *ex officio*, and consequent exposure to undue influence, was admirably constructed for voting supplies; and if the body had been larger and more indifferently chosen by the Clergy, not only would it have guarded the interests of its constituents incomparably better in this secular matter, but its decisions in affairs within its peculiar sphere would probably have borne along with them far greater weight and power than they ever possessed. It was convened, generally, but not invariably, during the sitting of Parliament by the King’s writ addressed to the Archbishops. In later times the Upper House was composed only of the Archbishops and Bishops, and the Lower of the Deans, Archdeacons, one Proctor for each Chapter, and two Clergymen from each Diocese. But independent of any defect that might exist in its construction, its powers—especially those of the Lower House—were never clearly defined, and hence disunion and dissension were sure to arise. The Upper House was jealous of the Lower, and sought to curb them in the free exercise of what the other considered their undoubted privileges. The Lower House in return was disposed to thwart the Upper Assembly.

The King, again, or his minister the Archbishop, while they were well disposed to the services of the Convocation so long as they furthered their own views, could not tolerate their proceedings if they were opposed to their will, or hurtful, in their estimation, to the peace and repose of the Commonwealth: and the poor Convocation, disunited in itself, and possessing no such powers as the equally disunited Parliament, to prolong its existence, at last ceased to be. The King and the highest Ecclesiastics presently found, with reference to the Church, what men are generally not slow to discover in similar circumstances, that it is more pleasant to exercise an unlimited authority, than to be unnecessarily thwarted and curbed in their proceedings by another body, for whose existence there seemed to be no necessity.

“ With regard to the re-assembling of the Convocation, there are those who say it used formerly to be more noisy than deliberative, that it tended more to division than unity, and did more harm than good, and hence argue that no better consequences would follow from its proceedings, were it to be resuscitated. Supposing this to be a true description of its bearing and tendency in former times, we shall only observe, that, constituted and circumstanced as it was, any other result would have afforded matter of surprise. Its proceedings too, though they had been in the last degree useful, would have been accompanied, like most other good things in this world, with certain disadvantages and evils. There seems, indeed, hardly any exemption from this general rule; and one cannot well see how there should be, so long as evil is ever blended even with the best of things. And so, were the Convocation now to be assembled with a fuller and more independent representation of the great body of the Clergy, with the powers and privileges of each House clearly defined, with the independence of each and of both guaranteed, and with no undue interference on the part of the Crown, no doubt evils of some kind or other would arise out of the proceedings of the venerable assembly. But, if it had competent powers as the supreme Ecclesiastical Court of the United Church of England and Ireland, there seems little reason

to doubt that the good which it would effect primarily for itself, and secondarily for the general advancement of the cause of truth and righteousness, would greatly surpass the evils which probably might attach to it. The power of the Church of England, were it concentrated and put in motion, is immense. We do not, of course, speak merely of the power of the Clergy, but also of that of the laity who are truly attached to her. These form the larger part of the same body—a body, taken together, of vast property, high attainments, and commanding influence—but for the present, as it regards the deeply important concerns of the Church, without a head, without motion, without life. The assembling of a Convocation might be expected to draw together the talents of the Church, now, as it regards its own defence, lying waste; to revive its energies, now apparently paralyzed; to call out its hidden resources from its mines of mental wealth and power, now wholly unwrought. The penetrating voice rising from within its walls would not only direct attention to the true character of the coming dangers, but, through the blessing of God, might raise up a bulwark of defence, against which its enemies should not prevail.

“ Sure we are that SOMETHING ought to be done, and that without delay, for the security of that venerable body, which beyond all fair dispute needs reformation,—but whose destruction is now unblushingly sought for by many, and various, and powerful foes.”

“ Exclusive of the differences in the state of the *Churches of England and Scotland*, there is this striking and important distinction, that the former possesses little or no ecclesiastical power or authority—no organization by which the wisdom, the power, the worth, and the influence of the body can be concentrated for defence against the assaults of its enemies, for warding off evil wheresoever it may arise, for strengthening, consolidating, and beautifying, its various parts, and for preserving and increasing its purity and vigour—whereas the ecclesiastical

constitution of the Scotch Church is complete, and in a state of full health, vigour and efficiency.

“ But, indeed, in this most important respect the state of the Church of England is wholly anomalous. If we look at the various dissenting bodies, not only at the Synod of Ulster in Ireland, or the Secession body in Scotland, but at the Wesleyan Methodists, the *Friends*, and even the Congregational and Baptist bodies (whose *independent* principles if fully acted upon would maintain each congregation separate and distinct), we find either an acknowledged and fully organized ecclesiastical body, maintaining an effective discipline, and on important occasions gathering up their strength for the accomplishment of its purposes, or some methods by which the same ends are substantially attained. It is the Church of England alone that lies exposed to view with hardly even the appearance of ecclesiastical authority or power—a mighty, but a scattered host—a powerful body, but its power so dissipated as to be unavailing and ineffective—a body threatened with dangers the most urgent and overwhelming, and lying prostrate, helpless, and trembling, simply for want of union, counsel, and organization.

“ We need not say that so flagrant a departure from propriety, from Christian order, and the characteristics of a Christian Church, as animated by a spirit “ of power, and of love, and of a sound mind,” received no countenance from the original organization of the Church of England. Her constitution was broken down for evil purposes in evil times.—A reform has now been effected in the State, and a great outcry is made for a reform in the Church. In effecting the reform in the State, the advocates of the measure sought, with a diligence which deserved success, for proof that they only wished to restore to the country what she formerly possessed.—If a reform is to be effected in the Church, a RESTORATION to her original organization, or an improved substitute for it, by which her power might be concentrated and rendered available, seems to be the first, the most reasonable, and the most indispensable step to be taken.”

“ The Government which endeavours to work the Church in the best way it can for the furtherance of its own purposes, which dreads the addition of any fresh trouble to its existing anxieties, and which may wish to have the future ordering of the Establishment in its own hands, cannot be expected to be the first to move towards the resuscitation of the long suspended powers of the Church, as the true path to a full and effective reformation of its existing evils and abuses. Human nature being what it is, the leading Prelates into whose hands large power and influence, of a secondary kind, are placed by Government, can hardly be expected to be forward in moving for a restoration of ecclesiastical power to the Church as a body. But that such a restoration is at any time desirable for the due order, beauty, and discipline of a true Church of Christ, few, we presume, will deny; while, under the pressure of the existing exigency, fewer still, we believe, will even doubt, that, according to all appearance, it is indispensable for the very existence of the Church of England as an Establishment.”

*Abstract of Parliamentary Return, 1827.*

## INCUMBENTS.

Resident in the Parsonage-houses . . . . 3598

———— within Two Miles of Churches or

Chapels . . . . . 815

Total Residents . . 4413

“ Doing Duty,”  
in each of the  
Classes.

## Exemptions,

Residence on other Benefices 2163

From other official engagements 456

————2619 . . . 504

Licenses, from want or unfitness

of Parsonages . . . 1389

———— Infirmary of Incum-

bent or Family . 395

———— under general circum-

stances . . . . 363

758

————2147 . . . 775

4766

## Cases not included in Exemptions

or Licenses, *viz.*

Absence without either . . 405 . . . . 295

Dilapidated Churches . . 39

Sinecures . . . . 33

Livings held by Bishops . 10

Vacancies . . . . 103

Recent Institutions . . . 71

Sequestrations . . . . 48

Returns defective as to Re-

sidence . . . . 604

1313

## Miscellaneous not included in

the preceding . . . . 41

———— 1354 . . . 11

———— 6120

Total Number of Benefices . . 10,533 1590

*Abstract of Parliamentary Return, 1827.*

## CURATES'-STIPENDS.

£10	and under	£20	. . .	6
20	. . . .	30	. . .	69
30	. . . .	40	. . .	173
40	. . . .	50	. . .	441
50	. . . .	60	. . .	892
60	. . . .	70	. . .	389
70	. . . .	80	. . .	415
80	. . . .	90	. . .	458
90	. . . .	100	. . .	156
100	. . . .	110	. . .	500
110	. . . .	120	. . .	69
120	. . . .	130	. . .	207
130	. . . .	140	. . .	52
140	. . . .	150	. . .	32
150	. . . .	160	. . .	162
160	. . . .	170	. . .	26
170	. . . .	180	. . .	15
180	. . . .	190	. . .	5
190	. . . .	200	. . .	3
200	. . . .	210	. . .	17
210	. . . .	220	. . .	2
220	. . . .	230	. . .	2
230	. . . .	240	. . .	2
240	. . . .	250	. . .	3
250	. . . .	260	. . .	4
280	. . . .	290	. . .	1
300	. . . .	310	. . .	2
310	. . . .	320	. . .	1
330	. . . .	340	. . .	1



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